THE

WORKS

OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

WITH

NOTES, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

BY T. SMOLLETT, M. D.

T. FRANCKLIN, M. A. AND OTHERS.

IN TWENTY-FOUR VOLUMES.

VOLUME X.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
AUG 17
1912
CAMBRIDGE

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY D. CHAMBERLAINE,

FOR R. MONCRIEFFE IN CAPEL-STREET.

M,DCC,LXXII.

THE CONTENTS OF THE TENTH VOLUME.

OBSERVATIONS on History Page 1

New Reflections on History 7

Anecdotes relating to Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia 11

PIECES relating to the HISTORY of CHARLES XII. King of SWEDEN.

Letter to Mareschal Schullemberg, General of the Venetians 28

Letter to Mr. Norberg, Chaplain to Charles XII. King of Sweden, and Author of a History of that Monarch 32

The Scepticism of History 39

A Discourse on the History of Charles XII. Prefixed to the first Edition 47

The HISTORY of CHARLES XII. King of SWEDEN.

BOOK I.

An Abridgment of the History of Sweden, to the Reign of Charles XII. The Education of that Prince, and an Account of his Enemies. Character of the Czar Peter Alexiowitz. Curious Anecdotes relative to that Prince and the Russian Nation. Muscovy, Poland, and Denmark, unite against Charles XII. 53

BOOK II.

A sudden and surprising Change in the Character of Charles XII. At eighteen Years of Age, he undertakes a War against Denmark, Poland, and Muscovy: finishes the Danish War in six Weeks: with eight thousand Swedes defeats eighty thousand Russians; and then penetrates into Poland. A Description of Poland and its Form of Government. Charles gains several Battles; becomes Master of Poland, where he prepares to nominate a King. 79

BOOK

CONTENTS.

BOOK III.

Staniſlaus Leczinſky elected King of Poland. Death of the Cardinal-primate. Skilful Retreat of General Schullemberg. Exploits of the Czar. Foundation of Peterſburg. Battle of Fravenſtadt. Charles enters Saxony. Peace of Altranſtad. Auguſtus abdicates the Crown in Favour of Staniſlaus. General Patkul, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, is broken upon the Wheel, and quartered. Charles receives the Ambaſſadors of foreign Princes in Saxony: and goes to Dreſden to viſit Auguſtus before his Departure 124

BOOK IV.

Charles quits Saxony in a victorious Manner: Purſues the Czar: ſhuts himſelf up in the Ukraine: his Loſſes: his Wound: the Battle of Pultowa: Conſequences of that Battle: Charles obliged to fly into Turky: his Reception in Beſſarabia 160

BOOK V.

State of the Ottoman Porte. Charles reſides near Bender: his Employments: his Intrigues at the Porte: his Deſigns. Auguſtus reſtored to his Throne. The king of Denmark makes a Deſcent upon Sweden. All the other dominions of Charles are invaded. The Czar enters Moſcow in Triumph. Affair of Pruth. Hiſtory of the Czarina, who from a Country-girl became an Empreſs. 190

BOOK VI.

Intrigues at the Porte. The Kam of Tartary and the Baſha of Bender endeavour to force Charles to depart. He defends himſelf with forty Domeſtics againſt the whole Army. He is taken and treated as a priſoner 224

BOOK VII.

The Turks convey Charles to Demirtaſh. King Staniſlaus is taken at the ſame Time. Bold Undertaking of M. de Villelongue. Revolutions in the Seraglio. Battle in Pomerania. Altena burnt by the Swedes. Charles at laſt ſets out on his Return to his own Dominions. His ſtrange Manner of Travelling: his Arrival at Stralſund: his Misfortunes. Succeſſes of Peter the Great: his triumphant Entry into Peterſburg 253

BOOK VIII.

Charles gives his ſiſter in Marriage to the Prince of Heſſe: is beſieged in Stralſund, and eſcapes to Sweden. Schemes of Baron de Gortz, his Prime Miniſter. Plan of a Reconciliation with the Czar, and of a Deſcent upon England. Charles beſieges Frederickſhall in Norway: is killed: his character. Gortz is beheaded 283

OBSERVATIONS

ON

HISTORY.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
1912
CAMBRIDGE

WILL public authors never ceaſe to give us falſe conceptions of the paſt, the preſent, and the future? In their opinion, ſurely, mankind muſt have been born to be deceived; with ſo much confidence do they pretend, even in this enlightened age, to obtrude upon us the fables of Herodotus; nay, and fables which even Herodotus himſelf would not have dared to impoſe upon the Greeks.

What the wiſer are we for being ſo frequently told that Menes was the grandſon of Noah? and with what appearance of juſtice can we affect to ridicule the genealogies of Moreri, while we ourſelves compoſe others no leſs ridiculous? Noah, (it is affirmed) ſent his children to travel into foreign parts; his grand-ſon, Menes, into Egypt; his other grand-ſon into China; I know not what other grand-ſon into Sweden; and a younger deſcendant ſtill into Spain. Travelling, in thoſe days, muſt have improved the minds of young gentlemen much more than it does at preſent. The moderns, in the courſe of ten or twelve centuries, have hardly been able to acquire an imperfect knowledge in geometry; but theſe ancient travellers were no ſooner arrived in thoſe uncultivated countries, than they began to foretel eclipſes. Certain it is, the authentic hiſtory of China

contains calculations of eclipſes for about four thouſand years. Confucius mentions thirty-ſix computations of the ſame nature, all of which, except four, the mathematical miſſionaries have found to be juſt. But theſe facts do not puzzle the writers who have been pleaſed to make Noah the grand-father of Fohi; becauſe they are reſolved that nothing ſhall puzzle them.

Other admirers of antiquity would make us believe, that the Egyptians were the wiſeſt people in the univerſe; becauſe, forſooth, they paid an extreme deference to their prieſts; and yet it is well known, that the wiſe prieſts and legiſlators of theſe wiſe people worſhipped monkeys, cats, and onions. We may extol the works of the ancient Egyptians as much as ever we pleaſe: ſuch of them, however, as ſtill remain, are at beſt but ſhapeleſs blocks; the fineſt of their ſtatues not being comparable to the moſt indifferent of our ordinary artiſts. The Egyptians muſt certainly have learned the art of ſculpture from the Greeks; there never having been a maſterly performance produced in Egypt, that did not proceed from the hand of a Greek. The Egyptians, 'tis ſaid were profoundly ſkilled in aſtronomy: the four ſides of a great pyramid are oppoſed to the four quarters of the world; is not that a convincing proof of the truth of the aſſertion? But were the Egyptians equal to our Caſſini's, our Halley's, our Kepler's, or Tycho-Brahe's? theſe good people told Herodotus, with great gravity, that in eleven thouſand years, the ſun had ſet twice in the ſame place where it riſes. Such was their aſtronomy *!

It coſt, according to Mr. Rollin, fifty thouſand crowns to open and ſhut the ſluices of the lake Mœris. This author is very dear with his ſluices; and, beſides, his

* If their knowledge in aſtronomy did not extend farther than the inſtances here given, they ſurely had no great reaſon to boaſt of their knowledge. But if we may believe Diodorus Siculus, and other hiſtorians beſides Herodotus, the Egyptians excelled all the world in the arts of geometry, arithmetic, aſtronomy, and medicine; and it is generally allowed, that Egypt was the ſource from whence Greece derived the firſt principles of the arts and ſciences, both for pleaſure and utility.

his calculations are falſe. There is no ſluice, (unleſs it be a very bad one indeed,) that may not be opened and ſhut for a crown: but it coſt, he ſays, fifty talents to open and ſhut theſe ſluices. It muſt be obſerved, that in the time of Colbert, a talent was equal to three thouſand French livres. Rollin, however, is not aware, that ſince that period, the current value of our ſpecie is nearly doubled; and that therefore, the expences of opening the ſluices of the lake Mœris muſt have been according to his computation, about three hundred thouſand livres, which is almoſt two hundred and ninety-ſeven thouſand livres more than enough. All the other calculations in his thirteen volumes ſeem to be equally inaccurate. The ſame author affirms, after Herodotus, that in Egypt, a country not near ſo extenſive as France, there was a ſtanding army of four hundred thouſand men, every one of whom had a daily allowance of five pounds of bread, and two pounds of fleſh. This laſt article makes eight hundred thouſand pounds of fleſh a-day for the ſoldiers alone, in a country where they hardly eat any fleſh at all. Beſides, to whom belonged theſe four hundred thouſand ſoldiers, while Egypt was divided into ſeveral petty principalities? But this is not all; we are further told, that every ſoldier had ſix acres of land free from taxes. Two millions four hundred thouſand acres of ground that paid nothing to the ſtate! and yet this poor and petty ſtate maintained a greater army than is now-a-days maintained by the grand ſignior, who is maſter of Egypt, and other territories, ten times more extenſive than it. Lewis XIV. it is true, had four hundred thouſand men in arms for ſome years; but that was an extraordinary and unnatural effort, and that effort hath ruined France.

Would people but take the pains to conſult their reaſon, inſtead of their memory, and to examine, rather than tranſcribe, we ſhould not ſee books and errors multiplied without end: nothing would then be committed to writing that had not the recommendation at once of novelty and of truth. The qualification in which hiſtorians are commonly defective is a true philoſophical ſpirit; moſt of them, as they now are, in-

ſtead of diſcuſſing matters of fact with men, content themſelves with telling tales to children. Should the fable of Smerdis's ears, or that of Darius *, who gained a kingdom by the neighing of his horſe, or that of Sanacharib, or Senakerib, or Sannacabon, whoſe army was miraculouſly deſtroyed by rats; ſhould ſuch fables as theſe, I ſay, be reprinted in the preſent age? If men will ſtill repeat ſuch improbable ſtories, let them at leaſt repreſent them as no better than they really are.

Is it allowable for a man of ſenſe, born in the eighteenth century, to entertain us with a ſerious diſcourſe concerning the oracles of Delphos? one while to tell us that this oracle propheſied that Cræſus would boil a ſheep and a tortoiſe in a tortoiſe-ſhell? at another, to inform us that battles were won agreeable to the prediction of Apollo? and to aſſign as the cauſe of theſe events the great power of the devil? Mr. Rollin, in his ancient hiſtory, undertakes the defence of oracles againſt Van Dale, Fontenelle, and Baſnage. "With regard to Mr. Fontenelle, ſays he, his book againſt oracles, drawn from Van Dale, is to be conſidered merely as a youthful performance." This decree, I am afraid, of Rollin's old age againſt Fontenelle's youth, will be reverſed at the bar of reaſon, where it ſeldom happens that rhetoricians gain their cauſe, when they enter the liſts with philoſophers. To be convinced of this, we need only attend to what Rollin hath ſaid in his tenth volume, where he means to ſpeak of phyſics. He there alledges, that Archimedes, in order to demonſtrate

* We ſee nothing at all improbable in this ſtory of Darius, who agreed with the other competitors, that next day they ſhould meet at a certain place, and the crown be conferred on him whoſe horſe ſhould firſt neigh. This circumſtance being known to Oenebarus, an officer of Darius, he cauſed a mare to be brought to his maſter's horſe on the very ſpot aſſigned as the ſcene of determination, and next day the ſteed no ſooner approached the place than he began to neigh. That ſuch an agreement ſhould be made, and ſuch a ſtratagem practiſed among a barbarous people, is not at all unlikely; as an analagous inſtance, we might quote from ſcripture the device of Jacob's peeled ſticks when he fed the flocks of Laban.

ſtrate the ſurpriſing effects of the mechanical powers, to his good friend the king of Syracuſe, ordered a galley, doubly loaded, to be placed on the ſolid earth, and then puſhed it gently into the ſtream with one finger, without ſo much as coming out of his chariot. This, 'tis plain, is the language of a rhetorician; had he had the leaſt ſmattering of philoſophy, he would at once have perceived the abſurdity of what he aſſerts*.

Would we improve the preſent time to the beſt advantage, we ought not, methinks, to ſquander away our lives in brooding over ancient fables. I would adviſe a young man to acquire a ſlight knowledge of theſe remote ages; but I would have him to begin the ſerious ſtudy of hiſtory at that period where it becomes truly intereſting to us, which, in my opinion, is towards the end of the fifteenth century. From that æra hiſtory is rendered more authentic, chiefly by means of the art of printing, which was then concealed. The general face of Europe was inverted: the Turks, who overſpread it, baniſhed polite literature from Conſtantinople, but it flouriſhed in Italy: it was eſtabliſhed in France; and it went to poliſh the rude manners of the Germans, the Engliſh, and other northern nations. A new religion delivered one half of Europe from papal ſubjection. A new ſyſtem of politics took place: by the help of the mariner's compaſs, the Cape of Good Hope was doubled, and the trade between Europe and China was rendered more eaſy than that between Paris and Madrid. America was diſcovered; a new world was conquered, and our own was almoſt totally changed: the chriſtian nations of Europe became a kind of immenſe republic, in which the balance of power was eſtabliſhed upon a more ſure and ſolid foundation than it had ever been in ancient Greece. A perpetual intercourſe unites all the parts of this vaſt body together, in ſpite of the wars ex-

* That Archimedes carried the mechanical powers to a ſurpriſing pitch of exertion is certainly true; and whether from a complication of theſe powers it might not be poſſible to do ſomething like what is here mentioned, we ſhall leave philoſophers to determine.

cited by the ambition of kings, and even in ſpite of religious wars, which are ſtill more deſtructive. The arts, which are the glory of every kingdom, were carried to a degree of perfection which they never attained in Greece and Rome. This is the hiſtory which every man ought to know: in this you will find no chimerical prediction, no lying oracles, no falſe miracles, no ſtupid fables; in this every thing is true, almoſt to the moſt minute circumſtances, about which, however, none but little ſouls will give them great concern. To us every thing relates, every thing contributes to our advantage. The plate from which we eat, our furniture, our wants, our new pleaſures, all conſpire to remind us that America, the Eaſt-Indies, and, of conſequence, the whole world has, within theſe two centuries and a half, been reunited by the induſtry of our forefathers. We cannot take a ſingle ſtep that does not recal to our memory the great change which hath lately been brought about in the world. Here are a hundred cities which were formerly ſubject to the pope, but which are now free. There have been eſtabliſhed, at leaſt for a time, the privileges of the Germanic body: here is formed the moſt perfect republic in a country, which is every moment in danger of being ſwallowed up by the ſea: England hath united true liberty with royalty: Sweden copies the glorious example; but her ſiſter Denmark has not the prudence to follow the ſame courſe. If I travel into Germany, France, or Spain, I every where find the traces of that inveterate quarrel, which hath ſo long ſubſiſted between the houſes of Auſtria and Bourbon; houſes united by ſo many treaties, all which have been productive of the moſt cruel and bloody wars. There is not a ſingle man in Europe, whoſe fortune has not, in ſome meaſure, been influenced by thoſe great revolutions. And does it become us after this to triſle away our time with Salmanazar, and Mardokempad, and with curious, but uſeleſs enquiries concerning the anecdotes of Cayamarrat the Perſian, and of Sabaco Metophis. No man ſure, when arrived at the age of maturity, and engaged in the management

nagement of weighty and important affairs, will ſit down to relate the tales of his nurſe.

New Reflections on History.

I Doubt not but the ſame change which hath lately happened in phyſics may ſoon take place in the manner of writing hiſtory. New diſcoveries have baniſhed the old ſyſtems. One would wiſh too to ſtudy the characters of mankind with all that intereſting particularity of circumſtance, which now conſtitutes the foundation of natural philoſophy.

We now begin to give little credit to the adventure of Curtius, who ſhut up a gulph, by throwing himſelf and his horſe into the opening; the ſhields which came down from heaven, and all the pretty taliſmans which the Gods were wont, with ſo much liberality, to preſent to mankind; the Veſtals, who ſet a ſhip afloat by the charm of their girdle: in a word, the whole group of thoſe famous fooleries, with which ancient hiſtories are ſtuffed, are now become the objects of ridicule and deriſion. In the ſame light we conſider what Mr. Rollin has related, with ſo much gravity, in his ancient hiſtory, of king Nabis, who complimented all thoſe who gave him money with the enjoyment of his wife, and placed ſuch as refuſed to contribute in the arms of a handſome doll, reſembling the queen exactly in outward appearance, but armed, under her petticoats with ſharp iron points. Who, when he hears ſo many authors repeating, one after another, that the famous Otho, archbiſhop of Mayence, was beſieged and devoured by an army of rats, in 698; that Gaſcony was deluged with ſhowers of blood in 1017; and that two armies of ſerpents fought a battle near Tournay, in 1059: who, I ſay, on hearing ſuch improbable ſtories as theſe, can refrain from laughing? prodigies, predictions, and fiery trials, &c. are now held in the ſame

degree of credit and eſtimation with the fables of Herodotus.

I hear mean to treat of modern hiſtory; in which you will find no dolls embracing courtiers, no biſhops devoured by rats.

Some people take great pains, (and not without reaſon,) to mark the preciſe day on which a battle was fought. They relate every article of a treaty; they deſcribe the pomp and ſolemnity of a coronation, the ceremony of receiving a cap, and even the entry of an ambaſſador, without forgetting either his Swiſs or lacquays. It is very proper that public records ſhould be kept of every thing, that ſo we may be able to conſult them on occaſion; and indeed I conſider all our large books at preſent as ſo many dictionaries. But after having read the deſcriptions of three or four thouſand battles, and the ſubſtance of ſome hundreds of treaties, I do not find myſelf one jot wiſer than when I began; becauſe from them I learn nothing but events. The battle of Charles Martel gives me no more inſight into the characters of the French and Saracens, than does the victory which Tamerlane gained over Bajazet, into thoſe of the Turks and Tartars. I own indeed, that when I read the memoirs of cardinal de Retz, and of madam de Motteville, I know every word of what the queen-mother ſaid to Mr. de Jerſay; I ſee how the coadjutor aſſiſted in raiſing and ſtrengthening the barricadoes; and I could almoſt make an abſtract of the long converſations which he had with madame de Bouillon. This ſerves very well to gratify my curioſity; but contributes little to my inſtruction. There are ſome books that contain the true or falſe anecdotes of a court. Whoever hath ſeen courts, or is deſirous of ſeeing them, is as fond of theſe illuſtrious trifles, as a country lady is of hearing the news of the paltry village from which ſhe came.

At bottom both are guided by the ſame principle; and the motive that actuates the one is as noble as that which influences the other. Under the reign of Henry IV. the anecdotes of Charles IX. were the ſubject of converſation; and during the firſt years of Lewis XIV. the

the duke de Bellegarde was the favourite topic of diſcourſe. All theſe trifles are preſerved for an age or two, and then ſink into eternal oblivion.

But the misfortune is, that in order to attain this ſuperficial kind of knowledge, we neglect ſtudies infinitely more uſeful and important. I want to know what was the ſtrength of a nation before a war, and whether that war contributed to increaſe or diminiſh its ſtrength. Was Spain richer before the conqueſt of the new world than it is at preſent? how much more populous was it in the time of Charles V. than in that of Philip IV? Why was it that Amſterdam, about two centuries ago, hardly contained twenty thouſand ſouls? Why, at preſent, does it contain two hundred and forty thouſand? and what is the moſt accurate method of determining the difference? How much more populous is England now than it was under Henry VIII? Is it true (as is alledged in the Perſian Letters) that the earth wants inhabitants; and that it is depopulated in compariſon of what it was ſome two thouſand years ago? Rome, it is true, contained at that time many more citizens than it does at preſent. I acknowledge too, that Alexandria and Carthage were great cities; but Paris, London, Conſtantinople, Grand Cairo, Amſterdam, and Hamburgh, were not then in being. There were three hundred nations in ancient Gaul; but theſe three hundred nations were not equal to ours, either in number of men, or in the knowledge and practice of the arts of peace. Germany was formerly a foreſt, now it is covered with a hundred opulent cities. One would be almoſt tempted to think that the ſpirit of invective, wearied with perſecuting individuals, had attacked the whole human kind. The conſtant and general complaint is, that the world daily becomes at once more vicious and leſs populous. What then? have we any reaſon to regret our not having lived in thoſe times, when there was no high-way from Bourdeaux to Orleans, and when Paris was a ſmall village, the inhabitants of which were perpetually cutting each other's throats? People may ſay what the will, but Europe certainly contains more men than it did formerly, and theſe men are more ac-

tive and induſtrious. One may eaſily know how much Europe hath encreaſed in people during the courſe of any number of years; for in almoſt all your great cities, a liſt of the births is publiſhed at the end of the year; and according to the ſure and accurate method lately laid down by a Dutch gentleman, equally ingenious and indefatigable, one may calculate the number of people from that of the births.

This then will be a principal object of attention to every one that would read hiſtory like a citizen and philoſopher. But he will take care not to confine his attention to this particular alone; he will enquire what hath been the prevailing virtue and vice of a nation; why it hath been powerful or weak by ſea; and how and in what degree it has been enriched during the courſe of a century; theſe two laſt articles may be fully aſcertained from the liſt of exportations. He will endeavour to learn how the arts and manufactures have been eſtabliſhed, and will trace them through all their windings and turnings, in their progreſs from one country to another. In a word, the revolutions in the manners of the people, and in the laws of the land, will be the great object of his moſt ſerious ſtudy and attention. Thus, inſtead of obtaining a partial knowledge of the hiſtory of kings and courts, he will acquire a thorough inſight into the characters of mankind.

In vain do I read the annals of France; all our hiſtories are ſilent with regard to theſe intereſting particulars. None of them have choſen for their motto, *Homo ſum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.* We ought then, in my opinion, artfully to interweave theſe uſeful inquiries with the general contexture of events. This appears to me to be the only method of writing modern hiſtory like a true politician and a true philoſopher. To write ancient hiſtory is, in effect, to mix a few truths with a thouſand falſhoods. Perhaps the uſe of this hiſtory is much the ſame with that of ancient fables; the great events which it contains are the conſtant ſubjects of our paintings, our poems, our converſation; and from thence too we derive the grand outlines of morality. We ſhould read the adventures of Alexander, as

we

we do the labours of Hercules. In fine, ancient hiſtory ſeems to have the ſame relation to modern, that old medals have to the current coin; the former are repoſited in the cabinets of the curious, the latter circulates through the world for the uſe and convenience of mankind.

But to undertake and execute ſuch a work, the author muſt be poſſeſſed of ſeveral kinds of knowledge beſides that of books; he muſt be encouraged by the government, as much, at leaſt for what he may perform, as were the Boileau's, the Racine's, and the Valincourt's for what they never performed; ſo that what a witty clerk of the treaſury ſaid of theſe gentlemen may never be applicable to him. "We never ſaw any thing belonging to them but their ſeal."

ANECDOTES relating to PETER the GREAT, Emperor of RUSSIA.

THE many important and difficult enterprizes undertaken and executed by Peter I. none of which had ever entered into the thoughts of any of his predeceſſors, juſtly procured him the ſirname of Great. Before his time, the knowledge of the Ruſſians was wholly confined to thoſe ſimple arts which are the reſult of mere neceſſity. So powerful is the influence of habit over the generality of mankind, and ſo little deſirous are they of what they don't underſtand; the genius unfolds itſelf with ſo much difficulty, and is ſo eaſily ſuppreſſed by the ſlighteſt obſtacles, that there is great reaſon to believe, that all nations continued, for thouſands of ages, in a ſtate of the moſt profound ignorance, till, at laſt, ſuch men as Peter the Great aroſe, at that preciſe period when it was proper they ſhould ariſe.

A young gentleman of Geneva, called Le Fort, happened to be at Moſcow, with the Daniſh ambaſſador, about the year 1695. He had learned the Ruſſian tongue in a very ſhort time, and ſpoke almoſt all the European

European languages. Peter the Great, who was then nineteen years of age, ſaw Le Fort, conceived a liking for him, took him at firſt into his ſervice, and afterwards admitted him into the moſt intimate familiarity. From him he learned, that there was another manner of living and of reigning, than that, which, from time immemorial, had been unhappily eſtabliſhed throughout his vaſt empire; and, had it not been for this young gentleman, Ruſſia had ſtill remained in its original ſtate of rudeneſs and barbarity.

Peter muſt have been born with a ſoul truly great, otherwiſe he never would have liſtened ſo readily to the inſtructions of a ſtranger, nor been able to diveſt himſelf of all the prejudices of the prince and of the Ruſſian. He ſoon perceived that he had a nation and an empire to form anew; but he was poſſeſſed of no means equal to the accompliſhment of ſuch an arduous and noble enterprize. From that time he took a reſolution of leaving his dominions, and of going, like Prometheus, to borrow the heavenly fire to animate his compatriots. This celeſtial ſpark he went to ſearch for among the Dutch, who, about three centuries before, were as deſtitute of it as the Ruſſians themſelves. He could not, however, carry his ſcheme into execution ſo ſoon as he could have wiſhed. He was obliged to ſupport a war againſt the Turks, or rather againſt the Tartars, in 1696; and it was not till after he had conquered his enemies, that he left his own dominions, and went to learn all the arts which were utterly unknown in Ruſſia. The maſter of the largeſt empire in the univerſe lived almoſt two years at Amſterdam, and in the village of Sardam, under the name of Peter Michaeloff; though his common appellation was Mr. Peter Bas. He ordered his name to be enrolled among the carpenters of that famous village, which furniſhed ſhips to almoſt all Europe. He handled the adze and the compaſs; and, after having laboured in his ſhop at ſhip-building, he ſtudied geography, geometry, and hiſtory. The mob at firſt crouded about him; but he ſoon checked their curioſity, by repelling his impertinent viſitors with a good deal of rudeneſs and ſeverity, which, however, thoſe people,

people, ſo remarkable for pride and reſentment bore, with great patience. The firſt language he learned was the Dutch: he then applied himſelf to the German, which appeared to him a very ſmooth and harmonious tongue, and which he ordered to be ſpoke at his own court.

He acquired likewiſe a ſmattering of the Engliſh, in his voyage to London; but he never underſtood the French, which hath ſince become the language of Peterſburg, under the empreſs Elizabeth, in proportion as the nation has been civilized and poliſhed.

His ſtature was tall; his countenance was noble and majeſtic, but ſometimes disfigured by convulſions, which even altered the features of his face. This defect in his organs was commonly attributed to the effects of poiſon, which was ſaid to have been given him by his ſiſter Sophia. But the true poiſon was the wine and brandy, in which, truſting too much to the ſtrength of his conſtitution, he frequently indulged to exceſs.

He converſed as frankly with a common mechanic as with the general of an army. In this he acted, not like a barbarian, who makes no diſtinction between men of different ranks, nor like a popular prince, who wants to ingratiate himſelf with all the world; he acted like a man who was deſirous of acquiring knowledge. He loved the women as much as his rival, the king of Sweden, dreaded them; and, as in eating, ſo in matters of gallantry, every thing was equally good. He valued himſelf much more on being able to drink a great quantity, than on poſſeſſing a nice and exquiſite taſte, capable of diſtinguiſhing your fine and delicious wines.

It is a common obſervation, that kings and legiſlators ſhould not allow themſelves to be hurried away by the violence of paſſion; but no man was ever more paſſionate, or leſs merciful, than Peter the Great. This is one of thoſe defects in the character of a king, which it is impoſſible to excuſe by a frank confeſſion; at laſt, however, he became ſenſible of his failing, and, in his ſecond journey to Holland, he ſaid to a magiſtrate of that country, "I have reformed my ſubjects, but

but have not been able to reform myſelf." It muſt be owned, however, that the cruelties with which he is reproached were as cuſtomary at the court of Moſcow, as at that of Morocco. Nothing was more common, than to ſee a czar inflicting an hundred laſhes, with a bull's pizzle, upon the naked ſhoulders of one of the firſt officers of the crown, or of a maid of honour, for having neglected their duty thro' drunkenneſs; or trying the goodneſs of his ſabre, by cutting off the head of a criminal. Peter had performed ſome of theſe Ruſſian ceremonies. Le Fort, indeed, had gained ſuch an aſcendant over him, as to be able, ſometimes, to ſtop his hand when he was juſt upon the point of ſtriking; but, unhappily, Le Fort was not always in his company.

His journey to Holland, and eſpecially his taſte for the arts, which now began to unfold itſelf, ſoftened his manners a little; for it is the natural tendency of all the arts to render men more humane and ſociable. He often breakfaſted with a geographer, with whom he made ſea-charts. He paſſed whole days with the famous Ruiſch, who firſt invented the art of making thoſe curious injections, which have carried medicine to ſo high a degree of perfection, and have freed it from its former naſeouſneſs. Peter gave himſelf, to the age of twenty-two, ſuch an education, as a Dutch mechanic would have given a ſon, in whom he perceived ſome ſparks of genius; and this education was much ſuperior to what any emperor of Ruſſia before him had ever received. At the ſame time, he ſent the young Muſcovites to travel and improve themſelves in all the countries of Europe. But his firſt attempts of this nature were attended with little ſucceſs. His new diſciples did not imitate the example of their maſter; there was even one of them that had been ſent to Venice, who never came out of his chamber, that ſo he might have no cauſe to reproach himſelf with having ſeen any other country than Ruſſia. This ſtrong averſion to foreign countries was infuſed into them by their prieſts, who alledged that travelling was an unpardonable crime in a Chriſtian, for the ſame reaſon that the Jews,

Jews, in the Old Teſtament, had been forbid to aſſume the manners of their neighbours, more rich and more induſtrious than themſelves.

In 1698 he left Amſterdam, and went to England, not in the character of a ſhip-wright, nor in that of a ſovereign, but under the name of a Ruſſian gentleman who travelled for his inſtruction*. He ſaw and examined every thing: he even went to the repreſentation of an Engliſh comedy, though he did not underſtand a word of it; but he found in the play-houſe an actreſs, called Miſs Croſts, from whom he received ſome favours, without having the generoſity to make her fortune.

King William cauſed a convenient houſe to be fitted up for his accommodation, which, in London, is a very great compliment. Palaces are not common in that immenſe city: there you hardly ſee any thing but low houſes, with paultry gates, like thoſe of our ſhops, without court or garden. Indifferent as the houſe was, the czar found it too handſome; and, that he might have the better opportunity of improving himſelf in ſea-affairs, he took up his lodging in Wapping. He frequently dreſſed himſelf in the habit of a ſailor, and made uſe of this diſguiſe to engage ſeveral ſeamen in his ſervice.

It was at London that he formed the deſign of drawing the Volga and the Tanais into the ſame channel. He even intended to join the Dwina to theſe two rivers by a canal; and thus to re-unite the Ocean and the Black and Caſpian Seas. The Engliſh, whom he carried along with him, ſerved him but poorly in this great

* Peter expreſſed a deſire to ſee the manner in which Britiſh criminals were puniſhed with death; but it proving what is called a maiden ſeſſion at the Old Bailey, he grew impatient and complained to King William, who told him he could not help his being diſappointed, as no perſon had been condemned, and he had no right to take away the life of any ſubject until he ſhould receive the ſentence of the law. "If that be the caſe, (ſaid Peter) you may take any of my retinue, and cauſe them to be executed in the Engliſh manner." But this offer his Britannic majeſty thought proper to decline.

great project; and the Turks, who took Aſoph from him in 1712, oppoſed the execution of ſuch a vaſt undertaking.*.

As he happened to want money at London, the merchants of that city offered him an hundred thouſand crowns, provided he would grant them a liberty of tranſporting tobacco into Ruſſia. This was not only a great novelty in Muſcovy, but was even inconſiſtent with the eſtabliſhed religion. The patriarch had excommunicated every one that ſmoked tobacco, becauſe their enemies, the Turks, ſmoked; and the clergy conſidered it as one of the greateſt privileges of their order, to hinder the Ruſſians from ſmoking. The czar, however, accepted the hundred thouſand crowns, and undertook to introduce the practice of ſmoking even among the clergy themſelves. He likewiſe reſolved to make ſeveral other innovations in the religious ſyſtem.

Kings are commonly wont to make preſents to ſuch illuſtrious travellers; and the preſent which William made to Peter was a genteel compliment, worthy of them both; he gave him a yacht of twenty-five guns, an excellent ſailer, gilt like a Roman altar, and ſtored with all kinds of proviſions; and the whole ſhip's crew chearfully conſented that they ſhould be included in the preſent. In this yacht, of which himſelf was the chief pilot, Peter returned to Holland to re-viſit his carpenters. From thence, about the middle of the year 1698, he went to Vienna, where there was no neceſſity for his tarrying ſo long as at London, becauſe, at the court of the grave Leopold, there was much more ceremony to be performed, and far leſs inſtruction to be gained. After having ſeen Vienna, he intended to have gone to Venice, and thence to Rome; but a civil war, occaſioned by his abſence, and by the permiſſion of ſmoking, obliged him immediately to return to Moſcow. The ſtrelits, the antient troops of the czars, ſomewhat akin to the janiſſaries, as turbulent, as undiſciplined, leſs brave, but not leſs barbarous, were inſtigated to revolt by

* If we may believe Capt. Perry, whom Peter engaged as chief engineer in this great work, the Engliſh were treated with equal ingratitude and brutality.

by ſome monks and abbots, half Greeks and half Ruſſians, who perſuaded them that God was highly provoked at the introduction of tobacco into Muſcovy; and thus threw the whole nation into a flame about this important quarrel. Peter, who was fully apprized of the great power of the monks and ſtrelits, had taken his meaſures accordingly. He had a numerous body of forces, compoſed almoſt entirely of foreigners, well diſciplined, well paid, and well armed, and who ſmoked under the command of general Gordon, a man thoroughly verſed in the art of war, and no friend to the monks. This was the very point in which the ſultan Oſman had failed, when endeavouring, like Peter, to reform his janiſſaries, and having no power to oppoſe to their refractory ſpirit, he was ſo far from being able to reform them, that he loſt his life in the attempt.

Peter's armies were now put upon the ſame footing with thoſe of the other European princes. He employed his Engliſh and Dutch carpenters in building ſhips at Veronitz, upon the Tanais, four hundred leagues from Moſcow. He embelliſhed manufactures of every kind; and, what clearly ſhews the profound ignorance in which the Ruſſiens had formerly lived, their firſt manufacture was that of pins. They now make flowered velvets and gold and ſilver ſtuffs at Moſcow. Such mighty things may be performed by one man, when he is an abſolute ſovereign, and knows how to exert his authority!

The war he waged againſt Charles XII. in order to recover the provinces which the Swedes had formerly taken from the Ruſſians, notwithſtanding the bad ſucceſs with which it was at firſt attended, did not hinder him from continuing his reformations, both in church and ſtate; and accordingly, at the end of 1699, he ordered that the enſuing year ſhould commence in the month of January, and not in the month of September. The Ruſſians, who thought that God had created the world in September, were ſurpriſed to hear that their czar had power to alter what God had eſtabliſhed. This alteration began with the eighteenth century, and was

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY JUL 17 1912 CAMBRIDGE

was uſhered in by a grand jubilee, which the czar appointed by his own authority; for having ſuppreſſed the dignity of the patriarch, he exerciſed all the functions of that office himſelf. It is not true, as is commonly reported, that he put the patriarch into the madhouſe of Moſcow. Whenever he had a mind, at once to divert himſelf and inflict puniſhment, he was wont to ſay to the delinquent, "I make you a fool;" and the perſon to whom he gave this pretty appellation, were he even the firſt nobleman of the kingdom, was forced to carry a bauble, jacket, and bells, and to divert the court in quality of his czariſh majeſty's fool. This taſk, however, he did not impoſe upon the patriarch; he contented himſelf with ſimply ſuppreſſing an employment, which thoſe, who had enjoyed it, had abuſed to ſuch a degree, that they obliged the emperors to walk before them once a year, holding the bridle of the patriarchal horſe; a ceremony which Peter the Great immediately aboliſhed.

In order to have more ſubjects, he reſolved to have fewer monks; and accordingly ordained, that, for the future, no perſon under fifty years of age ſhould be allowed to take the habit of that order; the conſequence of which was, that, in his time, of all the countries that contained monks, Ruſſia contained the feweſt; but after his death, this weed, which he had ſo happily extirpated, regerminated afreſh, owing partly to that natural foible of all monks, the deſire of enlarging their numbers, and partly to the fooliſh indulgence of ſome governments, in tolerating ſuch a pernicious practice.

He likewiſe made ſome prudent regulations relating to the clergy, and tending to the reformation of their lives, although his own, in all conſcience, was licentious enough; but he wiſely judged, that many things are allowable in a ſovereign, that would be extremely indecent in a curate. Before his time, the women lived perpetually ſecluded from the men. In Ruſſia it was a thing unheard of, that a huſband ſhould ever ſee the lady he was to marry. The firſt acquaintance he contracted with her was at church; and one of the nup-

tial

tial preſents was a large handful of twigs, which the bridegroom ſent to the bride, as a kind of warning, that, on the firſt tranſgreſſion, ſhe had reaſon to expect a little matrimonial correction. Huſbands had even a power of killing their wives with impunity: but ſuch wives as uſurped the ſame right over their huſbands, were buried alive.

Peter aboliſhed the bundle of twigs; prohibited the huſbands from killing their wives; and, in order to match the two ſexes with greater prudence and equality, and, by that means, to render the married ſtate more happy, he introduced the cuſtom of making the men and women eat together, and of preſenting the ſuitors to their miſtreſſes before the celebration of the marriage. In a word, he proſecuted his ſalutary ſchemes with ſuch vigour and reſolution, that he, at laſt, eſtabliſhed the ſocial ſtate throughout all his dominions. Every one knows the regulation he made for obliging his noblemen and their ladies to hold aſſemblies, where all tranſgreſſions againſt the Ruſſian politeneſs were puniſhed, by obliging the delinquent to drink a large glaſs of brandy, ſo that the honourable company frequently went home much intoxicated, and little corrected. But it was a work of no ſmall merit to introduce even a kind of imperfect ſociety among a people, who had hitherto lived in a ſtate of the groſſeſt barbarity. He even ventured to exhibit ſome dramatic performances. The princeſs Natalia, one of his ſiſters, wrote ſome tragedies in the Ruſſian tongue, not unlike to thoſe of Shakeſpear, in which tyrants and harlequins form the principal characters. The band of muſic was compoſed of Ruſſian fiddles, upon which they played with bulls pizzles. They have now French comedies and Italian operas at Peterſburg; in every thing, grandeur and taſte hath ſucceeded to barbarity. One of the moſt difficult attempts of this great founder of the Ruſſian empire was to ſhorten the coats of his ſubjects, and to make them ſhave their beards. This was the ſubject of great murmuring, and of many complaints. How was it poſſible to teach a whole

whole nation to make their cloaths after the German faſhion, and to handle the razor? arduous, however, as was the undertaking, it was at laſt accompliſhed, by placing, at the gates of every town, a ſufficient number of taylors and barbers; the former clipped the coats, and the latter ſhaved the beards, of all thoſe who entered; and ſuch as refuſed to ſubmit to theſe regulations, were obliged to pay a fine equal to forty pence of our coin. But, in a ſhort time, the people choſe much rather to part with their beards than their money. The women, who greatly preferred a ſmooth to a rough chin, aſſiſted the czar in this reformation: to him they were obliged for being exempted from the diſcipline of the whip, for being indulged with the company of the men, and for having ſmoother and more decent faces to kiſs.

While Peter amuſed himſelf in making theſe reformations, and while he was engaged in a bloody war againſt Charles XII. he laid, in 1704, the foundations of the large city and harbour of Peterſburg, in a moraſs, where there was not before ſo much as a ſingle cottage. He laboured with his own hands in building the firſt houſe: no difficulties were ſufficient to abate his ardour: workmen were compelled to come from the frontiers of Aſtracan, and from the coaſts of the Black and Caſpian Seas, to the coaſt of the Baltick. Upwards of an hundred thouſand men periſhed in the undertaking, partly by the ſevere labour they were obliged to undergo, and partly by the want and hardſhips to which they were expoſed; but, notwithſtanding theſe obſtructions, the city was at laſt raiſed. The harbours of Archangel, of Aſtracan, and of Veronick, were likewiſe built.

To defray the expences of executing ſo many mighty projects, of ſupporting fleets in the Baltic Sea, and of maintaining an hundred thouſand regular troops, the public revenue, at that time, was only about twenty millions of livres. I have ſeen an exact account of it, in the poſſeſſion of a gentleman who had been an ambaſſador at Peterſburg. But the wages of the workmen

were

were proportioned to the wealth of the kingdom. It ought to be remembered, that the conſtruction of the pyramids coſt the kings of Egypt nothing but onions. I repeat it again; we have only to exert our utmoſt endeavours; we can never exert them enough.

After having, as it were, created his nation, Peter thought he might take the liberty of gratifying his own humour, by eſpouſing his miſtreſs, a miſtreſs who well deſerved to be his wife; and accordingly the marriage was ſolemnized in public, in the year 1712. This lady was the famous Catharine, originally an orphan, born in the village of Ringen, in Eſtonia, brought up by a vicar out of mere charity, married to a Livonian ſoldier, and taken priſoner by a party of the enemy two days after her marriage. She was firſt a ſervant in the family of general Bauer, and afterwards in that of Menzikoff, who, from a paſtry-cook's boy, became a prince of the empire, and the firſt ſubject in the nation. At laſt ſhe was married to Peter the Great; and, after his death, became the empreſs of Ruſſia, a dignity to which her great virtues and abilities gave her a juſt claim. She ſoftened the ferocity of her huſband's manners to a very conſiderable degree; and ſaved many more backs from the knout, and many more heads from the ax, than ever general Le Fort had been able to do. The people loved her, they revered her. A German baron, a maſter of horſe to an abbé de Fulde, would have diſdained to have married Catharine; but Peter thought, that with him merit did not need to be ſet off by a genealogy of thirty-two deſcents. Princes are apt to believe, that there is no grandeur but what they confer; and that with them all men are equal. Certain it is, birth makes no more difference between one man and another than between an aſs whoſe fire carried dung, and an aſs whoſe father carried relics. Education makes a great difference, talents make a greater, and fortune the greateſt of all. Catharine had received, from her curate of Eſtonia, an education as good, at leaſt, as any lady of Moſcow, or Archangel; and ſhe was born with greater abilities, and with a more exalted ſoul. She had managed the family of

general

general Bauer, and that of prince Menzikoff, without being able either to read or write. Whoever is capable to rule a large family is likewiſe capable to rule a kingdom. This perhaps may ſeem to be a paradox; but undoubtedly it requires the ſame œconomy, the ſame wiſdom and reſolution, to command a hundred perſons, as to command ſeveral thouſand.

The czarowitz Alexis, ſon to the czar, who, like him, had married a ſlave, and, like him, had privately quitted Muſcovy, had not the ſame ſucceſs in his two undertakings. He even loſt his life in an ill-judged attempt to copy the example of his father. This was one of the moſt ſhocking acts of ſeverity that ever ſovereign exerciſed: but what reflects great honour upon the memory of the empreſs Catharine, ſhe had no hand in the untimely fate of this prince, who was ſprung from another bed, and who hated every thing that his father loved; Catharine was never accuſed of having acted the cruel ſtep-mother. The great crime of the unhappy Alexis was, that he was too much a Ruſſian, and that he diſapproved of all the noble and illuſtrious things which his father had done for the glory and emolument of the nation. One day, as he heard ſome Muſcovites complain of the hard labour they were obliged to endure in building Peterſburg, "Take comfort, ſaid he, the city ſhall not ſtand long." When he ought to have been attending his father, in thoſe journies of five or ſix hundred leagues which the czar frequently undertook, he pretended to be ſick: the phyſicians purged him ſeverely for a diſeaſe with which he was not troubled; and ſo many medicines, joined to great quantities of brandy, at once impaired his health and altered his temper. He diſcovered at firſt an inclination to learning; he underſtood geometry and hiſtory, and had learned the German language; but he neither loved war, nor would he ſtudy the art of it; and this was the fault with which his father chiefly reproached him. He had been married in 1711, to the princeſs of Wolfenbuttle, ſiſter to the Empreſs, the wife of Charles IV. This marriage proved very unhappy; the company of the princeſs was often abandoned

doned for a debauch of brandy, and for the careſſes of one Afroſina, a Finland girl, tall, handſome, and agreeable. Some people pretend that the princeſs died of grief, if, indeed, grief can ever be the occaſion of death; and that afterwards the czarowitz married Afroſina privately, in 1716, juſt at the time when the empreſs Catharine brought him a brother; a preſent with which he could willingly have diſpenſed.

The diſguſt between the father and ſon became every day more inveterate, till at laſt, in 1716, Peter threatened to diſinherit the prince, and the latter declared his intention of taking the monkiſh habit.

In 1717, the czar reſumed his travels, as well from political views, as from the motive of curioſity; and accordingly he now repaired to France. Had his ſon been inclined to revolt, had he in reality ſecured a party in his intereſt, this was the time to carry his ſcheme into execution; but, inſtead of continuing in Ruſſia and gathering partiſans, he went to travel like his father; after having, with great difficulty, collected a few thouſand ducats, which he privately borrowed. He now threw himſelf into the arms of the emperor Charles IV. the brother-in-law of his deceaſed wife. For ſome time he lived *incognito* at Vienna; from thence he went to Naples, where he remained almoſt a year, without either the czar, or any one in Ruſſia, knowing where he was.

While the ſon lay thus concealed, the father was at Paris, where he was treated with all the reſpect and deference which he had met with in other countries, and with a politeneſs which he could find no where but in France. If he went to ſee a manufacture, and was charmed with any particular piece of work, he was ſure, next day, to receive it in a preſent. He went to dine with the duke d'Antin, at Petitbourg, where the firſt thing preſented to his view was his own picture at full length, with the ſame dreſs which he wore. When he went to ſee the royal collection of medals, the minters ſtruck ſeveral medals of every kind before him, and preſented them to him with great politeneſs; at laſt they ſtruck one, which they purpoſely let fall at his feet,

feet, and left him to pick it up; on this he ſaw himſelf engraved in a very elegant manner, with theſe words, PETER THE GREAT. The reverſe was a Fame, with this inſcription, *Vires acquirit eundo*; an allegory equally juſt and flattering to a prince, who really increaſed his knowledge by his travels.

Upon ſeeing the tomb of cardinal de Richelieu, and the ſtatue of that great miniſter, worthy of the perſonage whom it repreſents, Peter diſcovered one of thoſe violent tranſports, and expreſſed one of thoſe noble ſentiments, which none but great ſouls are capable of feeling. He mounted the tomb, and embracing the ſtatue, "Great ſtateſman, ſaid he, why was you not born in my time; I would have given you one half of my empire, to teach me to govern the other." A gentleman, poſſeſſed of leſs enthuſiaſm than the czar, upon hearing the explanation of theſe words, which were originally pronounced in the Ruſſian language, obſerved, "That, if he had given him one half of it, he would not have been long able to preſerve the other."

The czar, after having traverſed France, where every thing diſpoſes the mind to gentleneſs and clemency, returned to his own country, and there reſumed all his former ſeverity. Having prevailed upon his ſon to leave Naples and repair to Peterſburg, the young prince was conducted from thence to Moſcow, and brought into the preſence of his father, who immediately deprived him of his right of ſucceſſion, and made him ſign a ſolemn deed of renunciation, about the latter end of January 1718, in conſideration of which he promiſed to grant him his life.

It was not however improbable, that ſuch an act might one day be reverſed; in order, therefore, to ſtrengthen it the more, Peter, forgetting his paternal character, and conſidering himſelf only as the founder of an empire, which his ſon perhaps might replunge into barbarity, cauſed a proceſs to be openly commenced againſt this unhappy prince, touching ſome reſervations he was ſuppoſed to have made in the act of renunciation, which had been extorted from him.

An

An aſſembly of biſhops, abbots, and profeſſors, was convoked; theſe reverend judges found, that, in the Old Teſtament, thoſe who curſed their father and mother were worthy of death: that, indeed, David had pardoned his ſon Abſolam, who had revolted againſt him; but that God had never pardoned him. Such was their opinion, without coming to any concluſion; and yet, it was the ſame in fact as if they had ſigned a warrant for his execution. Alexis had never curſed his father; he had never revolted like Abſalom; he had never lain publicly with the king's concubines; he had travelled indeed without the king's commiſſion, and he had writ ſome letters to his friends, in which he had only expreſſed his hopes that they would, one day, remember him in Ruſſia. But, notwithſtanding thoſe favourable circumſtances, of the hundred and twenty-four ſecular judges who ſat on his trial, there was not one that did not vote for his death; and ſuch of them as could not write cauſed their names to be ſigned by others. A report has been ſpread abroad in Europe, and it has been often committed to writing, that the czar cauſed to be tranſlated, from the Spaniſh into the Ruſſian language, the criminal proceſs againſt Don Carlos, that unfortunate prince and heir of a great kingdom, whom his father Philip II. threw into priſon, where he miſerably ended his days: but the truth is, there never was any proceſs commenced againſt Don Carlos; nor was the manner of his death, whether natural or violent, ever fully known. Beſides, Peter, of all princes the moſt deſpotic, needed not any precedents. What is certain is, that the ſon died in his bed the day after the trial, and Peter had then at Moſcow one of the beſt furniſhed apothecaries ſhops in Europe. It is probable, however, that the death of prince Alexis, the heir of the moſt extenſive empire in the univerſe, and unanimouſly condemned by thoſe who were now his father's ſubjects, and who, had he lived, would have one day become his, might be owing to the terrible ſhock which a ſentence ſo fatal and unprecedented muſt have given to his conſtitution. The father went to ſee his ſon when juſt upon the point of expiring, and is

ſaid to have ſhed ſome tears. *Infelix, utcumque ferent ea fata nepotes.* But notwithſtanding his tears, the wheels were covered with the broken limbs of his ſon's friends. He even beheaded his own brother-in-law, the count Lapuchin, brother to his wife Ottokeſa Lapuchin, whom he had divorced, and uncle to prince Alexis, whoſe confeſſor likewiſe loſt his head. If the Ruſſians have been civilized, it muſt be confeſſed they have paid dearly for their politeneſs.

The remaining part of the czar's life was ſpent in the proſecution of thoſe great deſigns, and of thoſe noble ſchemes and projects, which ſeemed to efface the memory of his cruelties, which, after all, perhaps, were abſolutely neceſſary. He frequently made ſpeeches to his court and council: in one of theſe he told them, that he had ſacrificed his ſon to the welfare and ſafety of his dominions.

After the glorious peace which he at laſt concluded with Sweden, in 1721, by which he obtained the whole of Livonia, Eſtonia, and Ingermania, and the half of Carelia and Vibourg, the ſtates of Ruſſia beſtowed upon him the name of Great, of Father of his Country, and of Emperor. The ſtates were repreſented by the ſenate, who ſolemnly conferred theſe titles upon him in preſence of the count de Kinſki, miniſter of the emperor; of Mr. de Campredon, envoy of France, and the ambaſſadors of Pruſſia and Holland. The European princes have been gradually accuſtomed to give this title of emperor to the Ruſſian ſovereign; but this dignity does not hinder the French ambaſſador from taking the right hand of thoſe of Ruſſia upon all occaſions.

The Ruſſians ought undoubtedly to regard Peter as the greateſt of men. From the coaſts of the Baltic Sea to the frontiers of China, he is a hero: but ought he to be conſidered in the ſame light among us? Is he comparable to our Condés, or our Villars, in valour, or to an infinite number of our cotemporaries, in knowledge, in genius, and in morals? No: but he was a king, and a king badly educated; and he performed what, perhaps, a thouſand ſovereigns in his ſituation would never have accompliſhed. He was poſſeſſed of that ſtrength

of

of mind, which raiſes a man above all kinds of prejudice, as well with regard to the paſt as the preſent. He was an architect who built with brick, and who, in any other country, would have built with marble. Had he reigned in France, he would have carried the arts, from the condition in which they now are, to the higheſt degree of perfection. His having five and twenty large ſhips on the Baltick Sea was an object of admiration: in our ports he would have had two hundred.

From a view of what he has done at Peterſburg, one may eaſily judge what he would have done at Paris. What ſurpriſes me the moſt, is, the little reaſon there was to hope that ſuch a man as Peter the Great ſhould ever have ariſen at Moſcow. It was as all the men who have ever inhabited Ruſſia is to one, that a genius, ſo different from the general character of their nation, would never be beſtowed upon any Ruſſian; and it was ſtill farther, as ſixteen million, the number of the Ruſſians at preſent, is to one, that this genius would not fall to the lot of the czar in particular. But, notwithſtanding theſe improbabilities, the thing has actually happened. A prodigious number of favourable circumſtances muſt have concurred; an infinite ſeries of ages muſt have elapſed before nature produced the man who invented the plough, or him to whom we are indebted for the art of weaving. The Ruſſians now-a-days are not ſurpriſed at their rapid progreſs; in leſs than fifty years they have become ſo familiarly acquainted with all the arts, that one would imagine they had been in poſſeſſion of them for a much greater length of time. There are ſtill vaſt tracts of land in Africa that require the reforming hand of a Peter the Great! ſuch a one may happen to come in ſome millions of years; for every thing is too late in coming.

PIECES relating to the HISTORY of CHARLES XII. King of SWEDEN.

LETTER to Mareſchal SCHULLEMBURG, General of the VENETIANS*.

SIR,

I Received by a courier of the French ambaſſador, the journal of your campaign in 1703 and 1704, with which your excellency has been pleaſed to honour me. Allow me, Sir, to apply to you what an ancient writer ſaid of Cæſar; *Eodem animo ſcripſit quo bellavit.* You muſt expect, Sir, that ſo great a favour will make me extremely ſelfiſh, and will expoſe you to freſh requeſts. I beg you would communicate to me whatever can give me any light into the particulars of the war of Charles XII. I have the honour to ſend you a journal of that king's campaigns; a king worthy of having fought with you. This journal reaches to the battle of Pultowa incluſive. It is the work of a Swediſh officer, called Mr. Alderfeld, who appears to be extremely well informed, and as accurate as it is poſſible to be on a ſubject of this nature. It is not a hiſtory; far from it; but it contains excellent materials for the compoſition of a hiſtory; and I flatter myſelf I ſhall be able to correct mine in many particulars by the memoirs of this officer.

Beſides, Sir, I muſt own to you, it was with particular pleaſure I found in theſe memoirs a variety of circumſtances that tally exactly with the informations from which I compiled my hiſtory. I, who doubt of every thing, and eſpecially of anecdotes, began to condemn myſelf touching a number of facts which I had advanced. For inſtance, I could no longer believe that Mr. de Guiſcard, the French ambaſſador, was on board the ſhip of Charles XII. in the expedition to Copenhagen. I began to repent of having ſaid, that the cardinal primate, who had ſo great a hand in dethroning king Auguſtus,

* Dated at the Hague, Sept. 15, 1740.

guſtus, ſecretly oppoſed the election of king Staniſlaus. I was almoſt aſhamed of having affirmed that the duke of Marlborough, when he went to have a conference with Charles XII. addreſſed himſelf to baron de Gorts before he ſaw count Piper. Mr. de la Motraye had cenſured me for all theſe facts, with a confidence which, I imagined, could proceed from nothing but better information; notwithſtanding which, they are all confirmed by the memoirs of Mr. Alderfeld.

In theſe memoirs I find that the king of Sweden, agreeable to what I had ſaid, ſometimes eat with king Auguſtus, whom he had dethroned, and that he always gave him the right hand. In them I find, that the kings Auguſtus and Staniſlaus met at the court of the latter, and ſaluted each other without exchanging a word: there, likewiſe, mention is made of the extraordinary viſit which Charles paid to Auguſtus at Dreſden, upon leaving his dominions. There, even, the witticiſm of baron Stralheim is quoted word for word, in the ſame manner as I have related it.

In the preface to Mr. Alderfeld's book, the editor talks in the following ſtrain:

"With regard to Mr. de la Motraye, who hath officiouſly taken upon him to criticize Mr. de Voltaire, the peruſal of theſe memoirs will only ſerve to confound him, and make him ſenſible of his own errors, which are much more numerous than thoſe he imputes to his adverſary."

True it is, Sir, and I plainly perceive it by this journal, I have been miſtaken with regard to the minute circumſtances of ſeveral military tranſactions. I have, indeed, aſcertained the exact number of the Swediſh and Muſcovite troops at the famous battle of Narva; but on many other occaſions I have fallen into miſtakes. Time, you know, is the parent of truth; which, after all, I am afraid we have but little reaſon to hope that ever we ſhall be able fully to diſcover You will ſee, Sir, that Mr. Alderfeld does not agree with you concerning ſome points relating to your admirable paſſage over the Oder; but I will believe the German general, who muſt neceſſarily have known all the particulars of

this paſſage, much rather than the Swediſh officer, who could not poſſibly know any more than a few of them.

By the memoirs of your excellency, and by thoſe of this officer, I intend to correct my hiſtory. I likewiſe expect an extract of a hiſtory of Charles XII. written in Swediſh by Mr. Norberg, chaplain to that monarch.

Indeed, I am much afraid that the chaplain has ſometimes viewed matters with others eyes than the miniſters, who have furniſhed me with materials. I ſhall eſteem him, to be ſure, for his zeal in defending the honour of his maſter: but I, who never was chaplain to the king, nor to the czar; I, whoſe ſole ambition is to ſpeak the truth, will always acknowledge, that the inflexible obſtinacy of Charles XII. at Bender, his reſolution of lying ſix months in bed, and many of his meaſures after the unhappy battle of Pultowa, appear to me more extraordinary than heroic.

If there is any poſſibility of rendering hiſtory uſeful, it is only, in my opinion, by pointing out the good and ill which kings have done to mankind. I think for inſtance, that if Charles XII. after having ſubdued Denmark, beat the Ruſſians, depoſed his enemy Auguſtus, and eſtabliſhed the new king on the throne of Poland, had granted peace to the czar, who begged it of him; had he returned home the conqueror and peace-maker of the North, and employed his attention in encouraging the arts and commerce in his country, he would then indeed have been truly a great man, inſtead of being but a great warrior, vanquiſhed at laſt by a prince whom he deſpiſed. It were to be wiſhed, for the happineſs of the world, that Peter the Great had been ſometimes leſs cruel, and Charles XII. leſs wedded to his own opinion.

I greatly prefer to both theſe ſovereigns, a prince who regards humanity as the chief virtue, who never has recourſe to war but through abſolute neceſſity, who loves peace becauſe he loves mankind, who encourages all the arts, and who, in one word, though a king, endeavours to act like a philoſopher. Such, Sir, is my hero;

hero; nor think that it is only a creature of the imagination. This hero actually exiſts in the perſon of a young king, whoſe fame will ſoon reach even to your parts; you will then ſee whether or not I am deceived: he deſerves ſuch generals as you. To write the hiſtory of ſuch kings is a pleaſing taſk; for then we write the hiſtory of human happineſs.

But if you carefully examine this journal of Mr. Alderfeld, you will find in it little elſe, but that, on Monday the third of April, there were ſo many thouſand men butchered in ſuch a field: that, on Tueſday, whole villages were reduced to aſhes, and the women, claſping their little babes in their arms, were conſumed with them in the ſame flames: that, on Thurſday, a thouſand bombs levelled the houſes of a free and innocent city with the ground, for not having paid immediately a hundred thouſand crowns to a foreign conqueror who happened to paſs by its walls: and that, on Friday, fifteen or ſixteen hundred priſoners periſhed with cold and hunger. Theſe, or ſuch as theſe, are the materials which compoſe the ſubject of his four volumes.

Have you not frequently thought, M. Mareſchal, that your illuſtrious trade is more ſhocking than neceſſary? I ſee Mr. Alderfeld ſometimes diſguiſes cruelties, which ought, in effect, to be forgotten, in order to prevent their ever becoming the object of imitation. For example, I have been credibly informed, that, at the battle of Frauenſtad, marſhal Renſchild cauſed twelve or fifteen hundred Muſcovites to be put to death in cold blood, ſix hours after the action, tho' they begged their lives on their knees. He alledges there were only ſix hundred, and that they were put to death immediately after the battle. This is a circumſtance, Sir, of which you cannot be ignorant: you made the admirable diſpoſition of the Swediſh troops even in this unhappy engagement; be ſo good, then, as to tell me the truth, for which I have as great a regard as I have for your glory.

I expect, with extreme impatience, the other inſtructions with which you ſhall be pleaſed to honour me. Allow me to aſk your opinion of the march of Charles

XII. into the Ukraine, of his retreat into Turky, and of the death of Patkul: you can eaſily dictate many things to a ſecretary, which will ſerve to throw light upon ſeveral truths; a favour for which the public will acknowledge themſelves greatly obliged to you. You are bound in duty, Sir, to communicate knowledge to mankind, in return for the admiration which they ſo juſtly entertain of your merit. I am, with the greateſt reſpect and eſteem, and with the moſt ſincere wiſhes for the preſervation of a life, of which you have frequently been ſo prodigal,

Sir, your Excellency's moſt humble
and moſt obedient Servant, V.

P. S. Juſt as I had finiſhed my letter, I was informed, that a French tranſlation of the hiſtory of Charles XII. written in Swediſh by Mr. Norberg, has been printed at the Hague. This will be a new pallet*, in which I ſhall dip the pencils with which I muſt retouch my picture.

LETTER to Mr. NORBERG, Chaplain to CHARLES XII. king of SWEDEN, and Author of a hiſtory of that Monarch.

PERMIT me, Sir, after having taken the trouble to read that part of your hiſtory of Charles XII. which is already publiſhed, to addreſs to you ſome juſt complaints, both with regard to your manner of treating that hiſtory, and the freedom which, in your preface, you preſume to uſe with thoſe who have treated it before you.

I love

* This pallet could not anſwer the purpoſe. It is well known that the hiſtory of Charles XII. by Mr. Norberg, is no more, to the year 1709, than a confuſed collection of facts ill related; and from 1709, than a copy of the hiſtory compoſed by Mr. de Voltaire.

I love the truth; but the old proverb, "All "truths ought not to be told," relates chiefly to inſignificant truths. Be pleaſed to recollect that paſſage in the preface to the hiſtory of Mr. de Voltaire. "The "hiſtory of a prince, ſays he, is not all that he ever did, "but only what he did worthy of being tranſmitted to "poſterity."

There are ſome readers, perhaps, who will be glad to ſee the catechiſm which Charles XII. was taught, and will take great pleaſure * in being informed, that in 1693, doctor Peter Rudbekius conferred the degree of doctor upon the maſters of arts Aquinus, Samuel Virenius, Ennegius, Herlandus, Stukius, and upon other perſonages, extremely reſpectable, no doubt, but who had very little concern in the battles, the triumphs, and defeats of your hero.

Perhaps it is a matter of great importance to Europe, to know that the chapel of the caſtle of Stockholm, which was burnt about fifty years ago, ſtood in the new aile, on the north ſide; and that there were in it two pictures of the intendant Kloker, which are now in the church of St. Nicholas; that the ſeats were covered with blue on days of public ſervice; that ſome of them were of oak, and others of walnut-tree †; and that, inſtead of large luſtres, there were ſmall flat candle-ſticks, which did not fail to produce a very happy effect; that there were there to be ſeen four figures of plaiſter of Paris, and that the pavement was black and white.

We will further believe ‡, that it is a thing of great conſequence to be well informed, that there was no baſe gold in the canopy which ſerved at the coronation of Charles XII. to know what were the dimenſions of it; whether the church was hung with read or blue cloth; and what was the height of the benches. All this may have its weight with thoſe who want to acquire a thorough knowledge of every the moſt minute concern of princes.

After

* Hiſtory of Charles XII. by Norberg, page 9. Huſſen's edition.

† Page 21. ‡ Page 31, 32.

After the tedious detail of theſe mighty matters, you tell us at what hour Charles XII. was crowned; but you do not tell us why he was crowned before the age preſcribed by law; why the queen-mother was deprived of the regency; how the famous Piper gained the confidence of the king; what was the ſtrength of Sweden at that time, what the number of its people, who were its allies, and what its government, its wants, and reſources.

You have given us a part of the military journal of Mr. Alderfeld; but a journal, Sir, is no more a hiſtory than materials are a houſe. Allow me to tell you, a hiſtory does not conſiſt in particularizing petty facts, in producing manifeſtos, replies, and rejoinders. This is not the manner in which Quintus Curtius compoſed the hiſtory of Alexander, or in which Livy and Tacitus wrote the Roman hiſtory. There are a thouſand journaliſts; but hardly have we two or three modern hiſtorians. We could wiſh that thoſe who prepare the colours would give them to ſome painter in order to form a picture.

You cannot be ignorant, Sir, that Mr. de Voltaire had publiſhed this declaration which your tranſlator repeats.

" * I love the truth and have no other aim nor intereſt than to know it. Thoſe paſſages in my hiſtory of Charles XII. in which I ſhall find myſelf to have been miſtaken, ſhall be altered. It is natural to think that Mr. Norberg, a Swede, and an eye-witneſs, ſhould be better informed than I, who am a ſtranger. I ſhall correct my hiſtory by his memoirs, and will do it with pleaſure."

You ſee, Sir, with what politeneſs Mr. de Voltaire mentioned your name, and with what deference he expected your performance, though he had received memoirs for the compilation of his own from the hands of ſeveral ambaſſadors, with whom it would appear you had little connection, and even from the hands of more than one ſovereign.

To

* Huſſon's edition, 4to page 13.

To this French politeneſs, Sir, you reply in a manner that favours ſomething of a Gothic taſte.

You ſay, in your preface *, that the hiſtory publiſhed by Mr. de Voltaire is not worth the pains of tranſlating; though, in fact, it hath been tranſlated into almoſt all the European languages, and hath undergone eight editions at London, in an Engliſh dreſs. You there add very politely, that a Puffendorf would have treated him as he did Varillas, as an arch liar.

In order to prove this charitable ſuppoſition, you take care to mark on the margin of your book all the capital errors into which he has fallen.

You particularly obſerve, that major-general Stuart did not receive a ſlight wound in the ſhoulder, as the French author, after a German writer, raſhly affirms, but only a pretty ſevere contuſion. You cannot deny that Mr. de Voltaire has faithfully related the battle of Narva, which in his book at leaſt forms an intereſting deſcription. You muſt certainly know, that he is the only writer who has dared to affirm that Charles XII. fought the battle of Narva with no more than eight thouſand men. All the other hiſtorians give him twenty thouſand: they ſay what is probable; but Mr. de Voltaire is the firſt that has told the truth in this important article. Nevertheleſs, you call him an arch liar, becauſe he ſaid that a ſuit of red laced cloaths was brought to general Liewen, at the ſiege of Thorn; and you magnify this enormous error, by poſitively aſſerting that the lace was not upon a red ground.

But what name will ſuit you, Sir, you who ſo laviſhly beſtow, about matters of ſuch mighty conſequence, the genteel appellation of arch liar, not only upon a man who is extremely fond of the truth, but likewiſe upon all the other hiſtorians who have writ the hiſtory of Charles XII. what name, Sir, will ſuit you, after the copy you give of the grand ſignior's letter to that monarch? Here follows the beginning of the letter.

" We

* Page 13.

" We *Sultan Baſha, to king Charles XII. by the " grace of God king of Sweden and of the Goths, " health, &c."

How could you, Sir, who have been among the Turks, and who ſeemed to have learned from them not to be very nice in the choice of your words, how could you be ignorant of their ſtile? What Turkiſh emperor ever deſigned himſelf " Sultan Baſha?" What letter of the divan ever began in this manner? What prince ever wrote that he would ſend plenipotentiaries, the firſt opportunity, in order to learn the particulars of a battle? what letter of the grand ſignior ever concluded with this expreſſion, " To the protection of God?" In fine, when did you ever ſee an expreſs from Conſtantinople dated in the year of the creation, and not in that of the Hegira? The iman of the auguſt ſultan, who ſhall write the hiſtory of that great emperor and his ſublime viziers, may well give you many opprobrious appellations, if the Turkiſh politeneſs admits of ſuch ruſticity.

Does it then become you, Sir, after the production of ſuch a piece as this, which would offend that ſame Mr. Baron Puffendorf, to exclaim againſt a lie about a red coat?

Beſides, are you a zealous advocate for the truth, when you conceal the cruelties exerciſed by the chamber of liquidations under Charles XI. when, in ſpeaking of Patkul, you pretend to forget that he defended the rights of the Livonians, who had committed them to his charge; of thoſe ſame Livonians who now live happily under the mild government of the illuſtrious Semiramis of the North? This, Sir, is not barely to betray the truth; it is to betray the cauſe of mankind; it is to fail in your duty to your illuſtrious country, which is an enemy to oppreſſion.

Ceaſe then in your compilation, to beſtow your Vandalic and Gothic epithets upon thoſe who write hiſtory: ceaſe to aſſume to yourſelf a right of employing that ſame barbarous pedantry which you impute to Puffendorf.

Do

* Page 137.

Do you know, Sir, that Puffendorf is an author ſometimes as incorrect as he is faſhionable? do you know that he is read, becauſe he is only one of the kind that was tolerable in his time? do you know that thoſe whom you call arch liars, would bluſh if they did not underſtand the hiſtory of the world better than your Puffendorf? do you know that Mr. de la Martiniere corrected more than a thouſand errors in the laſt edition of that book?

Let us open this book at a venture, which is ſo univerſally known. I light upon the article of the popes. He ſays, in ſpeaking of Julius II. "That he left be-" hind him, as well as Alexander VI. a bad name." Nevertheleſs the Italians revere the memory of Julius II. They conſider him as a great man, who, after having preſided in four conclaves, and commanded armies, purſued, even to his grave, the glorious ſcheme he had formed of chacing the barbarians from Italy. He was a lover of the arts; he laid the foundation of that church, which is the wonder of the univerſe; he encouraged painting, ſculpture, and architecture, and, at the ſame time, he rekindled the extinguiſhed valour of the Romans. The Italians deſpiſe, and with good reaſon too, the ridiculous manner in which the greateſt part of foreigners write the hiſtory of the popes. We ought to be capable to diſtinguiſh the pontiff from the ſovereign: we ought to be capable, though born at Stockholm, to entertain a high opinion of the popes. we ought to remember the ſaying of the great count de Medicis, viz. "That kingdoms are not governed with pater-noſters." In a word, a hiſtorian ſhould be a man of no country, and of no party.

If we again open baron Puffendorf's book, we ſhall find it aſſerted, in the article of Mary queen of England, daughter of Henry VIII. "That ſhe could not be recognized as his legitimate daughter without the authority of the pope." What a croud of errors in theſe few words! ſhe had been recognized by the parliament. and beſides, what need had ſhe of the aſſiſtance of Rome, in order to confirm her legitimation, ſince it never

ver had been either the intereſt or the intention of the Romiſh church to annul the marriage of her mother?

In reading the article of Charles V. I find that, before the year 1516, Charles had always in his eye his famous maxim, *ne plus ultra:* but he was then but fifteen years of age; and that motto was not compoſed till a long time after.

Shall we, on account of theſe errors, pronounce Puffendorf to be an arch liar? no: we will rather acknowledge that, in ſuch an extenſive work, a few miſtakes are excuſable; and we would entreat you, Sir, to be more accurate than he is; more thoroughly acquainted than you yet ſeem to be with the ſtile of the Turks, more polite with the French; in a word, to be more juſt and judicious in the choice of the facts you relate.

Among the many advantages with which the art of printing hath been attended, this is one inconvenience, that crouds of ſcandalous pamphlets are publiſhed, to the diſgrace of genius and of good manners. Wherever there are many writers there are many libels: theſe wretched performances, frequently produced in France, paſs current in the North, in the ſame manner as our bad wines are ſold there for Burgundy and Champaign. The former are read, and the latter are drank, often with the ſame want of taſte; but men of real knowledge will always deſpiſe what France rejects.

You quote, Sir, ſome pieces which are altogether unworthy the notice of the chaplain of Charles XII. Your tranſlator, Mr. Walmoth, hath honeſtly informed us, in his notes, that ſome of theſe are ſuch wretched and obſcure ſatires, that any gentleman would be aſhamed to cite them.

The duties of an hiſtorian are many and various. Allow me to remind you of two of them, which are of ſome conſequence; theſe are, never to rail, and never to be tedious. For the firſt I can eaſily excuſe you, becauſe your book will be the leſs read; but for the laſt I cannot poſſibly forgive you, becauſe I have been obliged to read it. In other reſpects, Sir, I am with all poſſible regard, your moſt humble, and moſt obedient ſervant.

The

The SCEPTICISM of HISTORY.

INcredulity, let us remember, according to Ariſtotle, is the foundation of all knowledge. This maxim ought to be attended to by all thoſe who read hiſtory, and eſpecially ancient hiſtory. What an infinite number of abſurd facts! what a confuſed heap of incoherent fables that ſhock the common ſenſe of mankind! of theſe do not believe a ſingle ſyllable. There were kings, conſuls, and decemvirs at Rome; the Romans deſtroyed Carthage; Cæſar vanquiſhed Pompey; all this is true. But when you are told that Caſtor and Pollux fought for that people; that a veſtal ſet a loaded ſhip afloat by the touch of her girdle; that a gulph was ſhut up by Curtius throwing himſelf into it; do not believe one word of it. You every where read of prodigies, of predictions accompliſhed, of miraculous cures performed in the temple of Æſculapius; do not believe a word of them. But a hundred witneſſes have ſigned the verbal proceſs of theſe miracles engraved on tables of braſs; and the temples were filled with votaries who atteſted theſe cures. That there have been knaves and fools who have atteſted what they never ſaw; that there have been devotees who have made preſents to the prieſt of Eſculapius when their children have been cured of a rheumatiſm; this you may believe: but with regard to the miracles of Eſculapius, do not believe a word of them.

But the Egyptian prieſts were all ſorcerers, and Herodotus admires their profound ſkill in witchcraft: do not believe one word of what Herodotus tells you.

With me every thing that is prodigious is incredible. But ought I to extend my incredulity to thoſe matters, which, though within the ordinary courſe of human affairs, are nevertheleſs deſtitute of moral probability?

For inſtance, Plutarch aſſures us that Cæſar, compleatly armed, threw himſelf into the ſea of Alexandria, holding ſome papers which he was unwilling to wet, in one hand, and ſwimming with the other.

Do

Do not believe a word of this ſtory which Plutarch tells you. Rather believe Cæſar himſelf, who does not ſpeak a word of it in his Commentaries; and be aſſured that when a man throws himſelf into the ſea with ſome papers in his hand, he muſt neceſſarily wet them *.

You will find in Quintus Curtius, that Alexander and his generals were ſurpriſed when they beheld the ebbing and flowing of the ſea, a thing which to them was equally new and unexpected; do not believe a word of it.

It is probable enough that Alexander killed Clitus in a fit of drunkenneſs, and that he loved Epheſtion as Socrates loved Alcibiades; but it is extremely improbable that the diſciple of Ariſtotle ſhould be ignorant of the ebbing and flowing of the ſea. There were philoſophers in his army; it was ſufficient to have been on the Euphrates, at the mouth of which there were tides, in order to be acquainted with this phenomenon †. Alexander had travelled into Africa, the coaſts of which are waſhed by the ocean. Is it poſſible that his admiral Nearchus could be ignorant of that which was known to every boy on the banks of the river Indus? Such ſtupid improbabilities, repeated in ſo many authors, have too much diſcredited the veracity of hiſtorians.

Father Maimbourg relates, after an hundred others, that two Jews promiſed the empire to Leo the Iſaurian, provided that when he ſhould be emperor, he would deſtroy images. What intereſt, pray, had theſe two Jews

* This, we apprehend, is meer cavilling. If the Commentaries were written on rolls of the papyrus, one dip in the ſea, at the firſt plunge, would do very little damage to the writing: but if the contents were written with a ſtylus on wax tables, according to the cuſtoms of the Romans, the water would have no effect at all; and in that caſe, Cæſar muſt have held up his arm, that the tablets might not oppoſe or retard his motion in ſwimming.

† Whether or not Nearchus was acquainted with the flux and reflux of the ſea, which by the bye, he could not have learned in the ſeas of Italy and Greece; he might have been aſtoniſhed at the great extent of the ſhore that was left dry by the ebb of the ocean, in ſuch a remote country as the Eaſt Indies.

Jews in hindering the Chriſtians from having paintings? how could theſe two wretched creatures promiſe the empire? is it not offering an inſult to the underſtanding of the reader, to entertain him with ſuch fables as theſe?

It muſt be confeſſed, that Mezerai, in his ſtiff, low, and unequal ſtile, intermixes with the ill-digeſted facts which he relates, many abſurdities of the ſame nature. At one time it is Henry V. of England, who was crowned king of France at Paris, who died of the hemorroids for having preſumed, ſays he, to ſeat himſelf on the throne of our kings: at another, it is St. Michael who appeared to Joan of Arc.

I do not believe even eye-witneſſes, when they report things inconſiſtent with common ſenſe. The ſieur de Joinville, or rather he who has tranſlated his Gaulic hiſtory into antient French, may aſſure me, if they will, that the emirs of Egypt, after having aſſaſſinated their ſultan, offered the crown to St. Lewis, their priſoner; they might as well tell me that we had offered the crown of France to a Turk. What likelihood that the Mahometans ſhould ever think of chooſing for their ſovereign a man whom they could regard in no other light than as a leader of barbarians, whom they had taken in battle, who neither underſtood their laws nor their language, and who was the capital enemy of their religion?

I give no more credit to the ſieur de Joinville, when he tells me this tale, that when he informs me that the Nile overflowed at St. Remy, in the beginning of October. I will likewiſe venture to call in queſtion the ſtory of the old man of the mountain, who, upon the report of a cruſade undertaken by St. Lewis, diſpatched two aſſaſſins to kill him at Paris; and, upon a freſh report of his extraordinary virtue, ſent off next day two couriers to countermand his firſt orders. This account hath too much the air of an Arabian fable.

I will boldly tell Mezerai, father Daniel, and all the hiſtorians, that I do not believe a ſtorm of rain and hail made Edward III. return to his right ſenſes, and procured peace to Philip de Valois. Conquerors are not

ſo

ſo devout, nor do they make peace on account of rain*.

Nothing, to be ſure, is more probable than crimes; yet ought they at leaſt to be well atteſted. Mezerai makes mention of more than ſixty princes who have been poiſoned; but this he affirms without any proof; and a common report ſhould be given as no better than a common report.

I will not even believe Titus Livius, when he tells me that the phyſician of Pyrrhus offered to poiſon his maſter, provided the Romans would pay him a certain ſum of money. Hardly at that time had the Romans any money at all; and Pyrrhus had wherewithal to purchaſe the republic, had it been expoſed to ſale. The place of firſt phyſician to Pyrrhus was probably more lucrative than that of conſul. I will not believe ſuch

* The greateſt minds are often actuated by the moſt capricious motives. If we ſuppoſe that the ſoul of Edward III. was influenced either by the terrors of ſuperſtition, or the ſentiments of humanity, we ſhall ſee no reaſon to withold our credit from this incident, which is recorded by all the hiſtorians. In the year 1360, Edward having invaded France, and filled that country with horror and devaſtation, while he was advancing at the head of his army, within two leagues of Chartres, he was overtaken by a terrible tempeſt, which he conſidered as a dreadful viſitation from heaven. The peals of thunder and flaſhes of lightning, intermingled with deluges of rain, ſmote the hearts of his beſt warriors with diſmay: but, what made the ſtrongeſt impreſſion upon Edward's own mind, was the havock occaſioned by a terrible ſhower of hail, which, in a moment, laid a thouſand of his beſt troops, and ſix times that number of horſes, dead upon the ſpot. Deeply affected by the ſcene, he threw himſelf from his horſe, upon the ground, and ſtretching his hands towards the church at Chartres, ſolemnly vowed to God, that he would ſeriouſly incline his mind to peace, if it could be obtained on equitable terms. Now we ſhould be glad to know what circumſtance of this tranſaction is incredible, or even improbable? We would aſk Mr. de Voltaire, whether he would not have had much more reaſon to doubt the abdication of Charles V. if the truth of the fact was to be determined by its credibility. We may once for all obſerve, that nothing can be more abſurd than the attempt to deduce from general canons, the motives of particular actions, which depend upon ſuch a variety of weakneſs, peculiarity, and caprice.

ſuch a ſtory as this, until I find it indiſputably proved, that a firſt phyſician of one of our kings engaged to poiſon his patient, upon receiving a reward from a Swiſs canton.

Let us likewiſe ſuſpect whatever appears to be exaggerated. An innumerable army of Perſians checked, at the Straits of Thermopylæ, by three hundred Spartans, does not ſtagger my faith; the ſituation of the ground renders the adventure probable. Charles XII. with eight thouſand hardy veterans, defeated at Narva about eighty thouſand armed Ruſſians; I admire, I believe the action. But when I read, that Simon de Monfort, with nine hundred ſoldiers *, divided into three bodies, beat an hundred thouſand men, I then repeat, "That I do not believe a word of it." I am told indeed that it was a miracle; but is it ſo very certain that God performed a miracle in favour of Simon de Monfort?

I would call in queſtion the battle of Charles XII. at Bendar, were it not ſufficiently atteſted by many eye-witneſſes, and did not the character of that prince render ſuch a romantic inſtance of heroiſm extremely probable. That ſcepticiſm which we ought to entertain with regard to particular facts, we ſhould likewiſe extend to the manners of foreign nations; let us refuſe our belief to every hiſtorian, antient and modern, who relates things contrary to nature, and to the general character of the human mind.

All the firſt accounts of America talk of nothing but anthropophagi, or man-eaters; and to read them, one would imagine that the Americans eat human fleſh as commonly as we eat mutton. The truth, when fully known, amounts only to this, that a ſmall number of Perſians

* Such exploits as theſe were often atchieved by Europeans, both in the Eaſt and Weſt Indies: nor are they at all ſurpriſing, if we conſider that the few were trained up to arms and diſcipline, and their antagoniſts a rude multitude without order and regulation, unarmed, unſupplied with neceſſaries, unprovided with ſubordinate command, raſh, obſtinate, fanatic, and encumbered even by the greatneſs of their own number.

Perſians were eat by their conquerors, inſtead of being eat by the worms *.

The new Puffendorf, as incorrect as the old one, ſays, that in 1589 an Engliſhman and four women, having eſcaped from a ſhipwreck which they had ſuffered in a voyage to Madagaſcar, landed on a deſart iſland; and that the Engliſhman laboured with ſo much ſucceſs, that in 1667, there were found on this iſland, which was called Pines, no leſs than twelve thouſand handſome Engliſh proteſtants.

The antients, and their numerous credulous compilers among the moderns, are perpetually telling us, that at Babylon, the beſt regulated city in the univerſe, all the maids and married women proſtituted themſelves once a year in the temple of Venus. I can eaſily believe, that, in Babylon, as in other places, a man might have a little pleaſure for his money; but I can never allow myſelf to think, that in a city, the beſt governed of any that were then in the world, all the fathers and huſbands ſent their daughters and wives to a market of public proſtitution, and that this decent traffic † was carried on by the expreſs orders of the legiſlature. We every day ſee publiſhed a hundred ſtupid ſtories of the ſame kind, concerning the cuſtoms of the Orientals; and where we have one traveller like Chardin, we have many thouſands like Paul Lucas.

Such

* If we may believe the moſt creditable hiſtorians who have written of America and Africa, the Caribbee Indians feaſted on human fleſh, and were even ſo dainty in this particular, that the priſoners deſtined for the market were fattened and even caſtrated, to render them the more plump and delicious. All the caciques in South America, and Motezuma in particular, had diſhes of human fleſh ſerved every day at their tables; and in the kingdom of Congo in Africa, human fleſh uſed to be ſold publicly in ſhambles.

† Is there any thing more ſurpriſing in this circumſtance, than in the practice of the Romans, (another polite people,) who lent their wives to one another occaſionally? Is this proſtitution more repugnant to the laws of decorum, than were the myſteries of the Bona Dea, or the orgies of the Bacchanalians among the Greeks, who were undoubtedly the moſt civilized nation in the known world?

Such, however, is not the hiſtory of Charles XII. On the contrary, I can aſſure the reader, that, if ever hiſtory deſerved credit, this, in a particular manner, is intitled to that diſtinction. I compoſed it, as is well known, from the memoirs of Mr. Fabricius, of the Meſſrs. de Villelongue, and de Fierville, and from the accounts of ſeveral eye-witneſſes. But as theſe witneſſes did not ſee every thing, and ſometimes ſaw things in a falſe light, I have been led, by their means, into more than one error; not indeed concerning the eſſential facts, but only with regard to ſome private anecdotes, which, however indifferent in themſelves, ſerve as matter of triumph to the little critics.

I afterwards corrected this hiſtory by the military journal of Mr. Alderfeld, which is very accurate, and which aſſiſted me greatly in rectifying ſome facts and dates.

I likewiſe peruſed the hiſtory written by Mr. Norberg, chaplain and confeſſor of Charles XII. This is a work very ill digeſted, and very ill wrote; it is crowded with a variety of trifling incidents foreign to the ſubject; and even the grand events are rendered trifling, by the inſipid manner of relating them. It is a collection of ſuch reſcripts, declarations, and manifeſtoes, as are uſually publiſhed in the name of kings, when they are at war. Theſe neither ſerve to point out the cauſes of events, nor to give us more diſtinct ideas of military and political tranſactions; and beſides, they are intolerably irkſome to the reader. A writer can, at beſt, but conſult them occaſionally, in order to derive from them a little information; in the ſame manner as an architect makes uſe of rubbiſh in raiſing an edifice.

Among the public pieces, with which Norberg hath interlarded his wretched hiſtory, there are ſome which are even falſe and abſurd; ſuch as the letter of Achmet, the Turkiſh emperor, whom this hiſtorian calls ſultan baſha, by the grace of God*.

This ſame Norberg makes the king of Sweden ſay what that monarch never did, nor ever could ſay, in the

* See Mr. de Voltaire's letter to Mr. Norberg.

the affair of Staniſlaus. He pretends that Charles XII. told the primate, by way of anſwer to his objections, that Staniſlaus had gained a great many friends in his journey to Italy. Certain, however, it is, that Staniſlaus never was in Italy, as that monarch hath himſelf aſſured me. After all, what matters it, whether a Pole, in the ſixteenth century, travelled into Italy or not for his amuſement? What an infinite number of uſeleſs facts ought to be retrenched from hiſtory! and how do I felicitate myſelf in having abridged the hiſtory of Charles XII!

Norberg had neither judgment nor genius, nor a ſufficient knowledge of the world; and it was for that reaſon, perhaps, that Charles XII. thought proper to chooſe him for his confeſſor. Whether he made that prince a good Chriſtian or not, I will not take upon me to determine, but moſt undoubtedly he has not made him a hero; and the memory of Charles XII. would be buried in oblivion, were it not tranſmitted to poſterity by abler hiſtorians than Mr. Norberg.

It may not here be improper to inform the reader, that there appeared, ſome years ago, a ſmall pamphlet, entitled, "Hiſtorical and Critical Remarks on the Hiſtory of Charles XII. by Mr. de Voltaire." This little performance was compoſed from ſome anecdotes of count Poniatowſki. Theſe contained his anſwers to ſome freſh queſtions which I had propoſed to him in his laſt journey to Paris. But his ſecretary having taken a double copy of them, they fell into the hands of a Dutch bookſeller, who did not fail to publiſh them; and the corrector of the preſs gave them the title of "Critical," in order to procure them a better ſale. This is one of thoſe petty larcenies, which are ſometimes practiſed in the bookſelling trade.

La Motraye, a domeſtic of Mr. Fabricius, has likewiſe publiſhed ſome remarks on this hiſtory. Among the errors and trifles with which this critique of la Motraye is filled, there are ſome things that are true and uſeful, and of theſe I have taken care

to

to avail myſelf in the latter editions of my hiſtory, eſpecially in that of 1739. An hiſtorian ſhould neglect nothing: he ought, if poſſible, to conſult both kings and valets de chambre.

A DISCOURSE on the HISTORY of CHARLES XII. Prefixed to the firſt Edition.

FEW are the princes whoſe lives merit a particular hiſtory. In vain have moſt of them been the objects of ſlander, or of flattery. Small is the number of thoſe whoſe memory is preſerved; and that number would be ſtill more inconſiderable, were none but the good remembered.

The princes who have the beſt claim to immortality are ſuch as have benefited mankind. Thus, while France endures, the affection of Lewis XII. for his people will ever be had in grateful remembrance. The great failings of Francis I. will be excuſed, for the ſake of the arts and ſciences of which he was the father. Bleſſed will be the memory of Henry IV. who conquered his kingdom as much by his clemency as by his valour. And the munificence of Lewis XIV. in protecting the arts which owed their birth to Francis I. will ever be extolled.

It is for a very different reaſon, that the memory of bad princes is preſerved; like fires, plagues, and inundations, they are remembered only for the miſchief they have done.

Conquerors hold a middle rank between good kings and tyrants, but are moſt akin to the latter. As they have a glaring reputation, we are deſirous of knowing the moſt minute circumſtances of their lives; for ſuch is the weakneſs of mankind, that they admire thoſe who have rendered themſelves remarkable for wickedneſs, and talk with greater pleaſure of the deſtroyer than of the founder of an empire.

As

As for thoſe princes who have neither diſtinguiſhed themſelves in peace nor in war; who have neither been remarkable for great virtues nor great vices; their lives furniſh ſo little matter, either for imitation or inſtruction, that they are not worthy of being committed to writing. Of ſo many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany, and Muſcovy; of ſo many ſultans, caliphs, popes, and kings; how few are there, whoſe names deſerve to be recorded any where but in chronological tables, where they only ſerve to mark the different epochas.

There is a vulgar among princes, as well as among the reſt of mankind; yet ſuch is the itch of writing, that no ſooner is a prince dead, than the world is filled with volumes under the title of memoirs and hiſtories of his life, and anecdotes of his courts. By theſe means books have been multiplied in ſuch a manner, that were a man to live an hundred years, and to employ them all in reading, he would not have time to run over what hath been publiſhed relating to the hiſtory of Europe alone, for the two laſt centuries.

This eager and unreaſonable deſire of tranſmitting uſeleſs ſtories to poſterity, and of fixing the attention of future ages upon common events, proceeds from a weakneſs extremely incident to thoſe who have lived in courts, and have unhappily been engaged in the management of public affairs. They conſider the court in which they have lived as the moſt magnificent in the world; their king as the greateſt monarch; and the affairs in which they have been concerned as the moſt important that ever were tranſacted: and they vainly imagine, that poſterity will view them in the ſame light.

If a prince undertakes a war, or his court is embroiled in cabals and intrigues; if he buys the friendſhip of one of his neighbours, or ſells his own to another; if, after ſome victories and defeats, he at laſt makes peace with his enemies; his ſubjects are ſo warm and intereſted by the part which they themſelves have acted in theſe ſcenes, that they regard their own age as the moſt glorious that hath exiſted ſince the creation. But what

what is the conſequence? Why, this prince dies; new meaſures are adopted; the intrigues of his court, his miſtreſſes, his miniſters, his generals, his wars, and even himſelf, is forgotten.

Ever ſince the time that Chriſtian princes have been endeavouring to cheat one another, and have alternately been making war and peace, they have ſigned an immenſe number of treaties, and fought as many battles; they have performed many glorious, and many infamous actions. Nevertheleſs, ſhould all this heap of tranſactions be tranſmitted to poſterity, they would moſt of them deſtroy and annihilate each other: and the memory of thoſe only would remain which have produced great revolutions, or which, being related by able writers, are preſerved from oblivion, like the pictures of obſcure perſons, drawn by a maſterly hand.

Senſible then, as we are, of the truth of theſe obſervations, we ſhould not have added a particular hiſtory of Charles XII. king of Sweden, to the infinite number of books with which the world is already crowded, were it not that he and his rival, Peter Alexiowitz, by far the greater man of the two, are univerſally allowed to be the moſt illuſtrious perſons that have appeared for upwards of twenty centuries. The trifling pleaſure, however, of relating extraordinary events was not our only motive for engaging in this work; we flattered ourſelves that it might be of ſome little uſe to princes, ſhould it ever happen to fall into their hands. No king, ſurely, can be ſo incorrigible as, when he reads the hiſtory of Charles XII. not to be cured of the vain ambition of making conqueſts. Where is the prince that can ſay, I have more courage, more virtues, more reſolution, greater ſtrength of body, greater ſkill in war, or better troops, than Charles XII? And yet, if, with all theſe advantages, and after ſo many victories, Charles was ſo unfortunate, what fate may other princes expect, who, with leſs capacity and fewer reſources, ſhall entertain the ſame ambitious views?

This hiſtory is compoſed from the relations of ſome perſons of diſtinction, who lived ſeveral years with

Charles XII. and with Peter the Great, emperor of Muſcovy; and who having retired, long after the death of theſe princes, into a country of liberty, can have no intereſt in concealing the truth. Mr. Fabricius, who lived in the moſt intimate familiarity with Charles XII. Mr. de Fierville, the French ambaſſador; Mr. de Villelongue, a colonel in the Swediſh ſervice, and even Mr. Poniatowſki, have all of them contributed their ſhare in furniſhing me with materials.

In this work we have not ventured to advance a ſingle fact, without conſulting eye-witneſſes of undoubted veracity; a circumſtance that renders this hiſtory very different from thoſe gazettes, which have already been publiſhed under the title of lives of Charles XII. If we have omitted ſome little ſkirmiſhes between the Swediſh and Muſcovite officers, the reaſon is, that we mean to write the hiſtory, not of theſe officers, but only of the king of Sweden, and even of his life none but the moſt important events. The hiſtory of a prince, in our opinion, is not to relate every thing he did, but only what he did worthy of being tranſmitted to poſterity.

Here it may not be improper to remark, that many things, which were true at the time of writing this hiſtory in 1728, are not ſo at preſent. Commerce, for inſtance, begins to be more encouraged in Sweden. The Poliſh infantry are better diſciplined, and are provided with regimental clothes, a convenience which they then wanted. In reading hiſtory, one ought always to remember the time in which the author wrote. To peruſe the memoirs of cardinal de Retz, one would take the French for a ſet of enthuſiaſts, breathing nothing but faction, madneſs, and civil diſcord. To read the hiſtory of the happy years of Lewis XIV. one would think they were born to obey, to conquer, and to cultivate the polite arts. And, ſhould any one conſult the memoirs of the firſt years of Lewis XV. he will find them devoted to luxury and avarice, and too regardleſs of every thing elſe. The Spaniards at preſent are not the Spaniards of Charles V. and yet they may be ſo in a few years. The Engliſh of this age bear no more reſemblance

reſemblance to the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the monks and monſignori, that crowd the ſtreets of Rome, do to the antient Scipios. I doubt much whether the Swediſh troops could be rendered, all of a ſudden, ſo hardy and warlike as were thoſe of Charles XII. We ſay of a man, that he was brave at ſuch a time; in like manner we ſhould ſay in ſpeaking of a nation, they were of this or that character in ſuch a year, and under ſuch a government.

Should any prince or miniſter meet with diſagreeable truths in this book, let them remember, that, as they act in a public ſtation, they ought to give the public an account of their conduct. Such is the price they muſt pay for their greatneſs. The buſineſs of an hiſtorian is to record, not to flatter; and the only way to oblige mankind to ſpeak well of us, is to contribute all that lies in our power to their happineſs and welfare.

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK I.

THE CONTENTS.

An Abridgement of the Hiſtory of SWEDEN, to the Reign of CHARLES XII. The Education of that Prince, and an Account of his Enemies. Character of the Czar PETER ALEXIOWITZ. Curious Anecdotes relative to that Prince and the RUSSIAN Nation. MUSCOVY, POLAND, and DENMARK, unite againſt CHARLES XII.

SWEDEN and Finland make up a kingdom two hundred leagues broad, and three hundred long. This country reaches from the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, or thereabouts, to the ſeventieth. It lies under a very ſevere climate, which is hardly ever ſoftened either by the return of ſpring or of autumn. The winter prevails there nine months in the year. The ſcorching heats of the ſummer ſucceed immediately to the exceſſive cold of the winter. The froſt begins in the

month of October, without any of thoſe imperceptible gradations, which in other countries uſher in the ſeaſons, and render the alteration more agreeable. Nature, in return, hath given to this cold climate a clear ſky and a pure air. The almoſt conſtant heat of the ſummer produces flowers and fruits in a very ſhort time. The long nights of the winter are tempered by the evening and morning twilights, which laſt for a greater or leſs time, in proportion as the ſun is nearer to, or farther removed from, Sweden; and the light of the moon, unobſcured by clouds, and encreaſed by the reflection of the ſnow that covers the ground, and frequently by the Aurora Borealis, makes it as convenient to travel in Sweden by night as by day. For want of paſture, the cattle there are ſmaller than in the more ſouthern parts of Europe; but the men are of a large ſtature, healthful from the purity of the air, and ſtrong from the ſeverity of the climate; they live to a great age, unleſs enfeebled by the immoderate uſe of wines and ſtrong liquors, of which the northern nations ſeem to be the more fond, the leſs nature hath indulged them with theſe commodities.

The Swedes are well made, ſtrong, and active, and capable of enduring the greateſt fatigue, want, and hunger. Born with a military genius, and high ſpirit, they are more brave than induſtrious, having long neglected, and even at preſent but little cultivating the arts of commerce, which alone can ſupply them with thoſe productions in which their country is deficient. It was chiefly from Sweden *, they ſay, (one part of which is ſtill called Gothland) that thoſe ſwarms of Goths iſſued forth, who like a deluge over-ran Europe, and wreſted it

* If our author had reflected with his uſual preciſion, he would have perceived that a cold, barren country, of the extent of Sweden, could not poſſibly furniſh one hundreth part of thoſe multitudes that deluged all Europe; and a little enquiry would have given him to underſtand, that the Goths themſelves came from Scythia or Tartary, which was called the *Officina Gentium*. It is now generally allowed that the Celtæ, the Goths, the Heruli, Vandals, and Huns, were all originally Tartars.

it from the Romans, who had uſurped the dominion of that vaſt country, which they continued for the ſpace of five hundred years to harraſs by their tyranny, and to civilize by their laws.

The northern countries were much more populous at that time than they are preſent. Religion, by allowing the men a plurality of wives, gave them an opportunity of furniſhing the ſtate with more ſubjects. The women themſelves knew no reproach but that of ſterility or idleneſs; and being as ſtrong and as laborious as the men, they bore children faſter and for a longer time. Sweden, however, with that part of Finland which it ſtill retains, does not contain above four millions of inhabitants. The ſoil is poor and barren; Schonen is the only province that bears wheat. The current coin of the kingdom does not exceed nine millions of livres. The public bank, which is the oldeſt in Europe, was at firſt eſtabliſhed from mere neceſſity; the copper and iron, in which their payments were formerly made, being too heavy to be tranſported.

Sweden preſerved its freedom without interruption to the middle of the fourteenth century. During that long period, the form of government was more than once altered; but all theſe alterations were in favour of liberty. The firſt magiſtrate was inveſted with the name of king, a title which, in different countries, is attended with very different degrees of power. In France and Spain it ſignifies an abſolute monarch: in Poland, Sweden, and England, it means the firſt man of the republic. This king could do nothing without the ſenate; and the ſenate depended upon the ſtates-general, which were frequently aſſembled. The repreſentatives of the nation, in theſe grand aſſemblies, were the gentry, the biſhops, and the deputies of the towns; and in proceſs of time, the very peaſants, a claſs of people unjuſtly deſpiſed in other places, and ſubject to ſlavery in almoſt all the northern countries, were admitted to a ſhare in the adminiſtration.

About the year 1492, this nation, ſo jealous of its liberty, and which ſtill piques itſelf on having conquered Rome about thirteen hundred years ago, was ſubjected

to the yoke by a woman, and by a people leſs powerful than the Swedes

Margaret of Valdemar, the Semiramis of the North, and queen of Denmark and Norway, ſubdued Sweden by force and ſtratagem, and united theſe three extenſive kingdoms into one mighty monarchy. After her death, Sweden was rent by civil wars; it alternately threw off and ſubmitted to the Daniſh yoke; was ſometimes governed by kings, and ſometimes by adminiſtrators. About the year 1520, this unhappy kingdom was horribly harraſſed by two tyrants: the one was Chriſtian II. king of Denmark, a monſter whoſe character was entirely compoſed of vices, without the leaſt ingredient of virtue: the other an archbiſhop of Upſal, and primate of the kingdom, as barbarous as the former. Theſe two, by mutual agreement, cauſed the conſuls and the magiſtrates of Stockholm, together with ninety-four ſenators, to be ſeized in one day, and to be executed by the hand of the common hangman, under the frivolous pretence that they were excommunicated by the pope, for having dared to defend the rights of the ſtate againſt the encroachments of the archbiſhop.

While theſe two men, unanimous in their oppreſſive meaſures, and diſagreeing only about the diviſion of the ſpoil, domineered over Sweden with all the tyranny of the moſt abſolute deſpotiſm, and all the cruelty of the moſt implacable revenge, a new and unexpected event gave a ſudden turn to the ſtate of affairs in the North.

Guſtavus Vaſa, a young man, ſprung from the antient kings of Sweden, aroſe from the foreſts of Dalecarlia, where he had long lain concealed, and came to deliver his country from bondage. He was one of thoſe great ſouls whom nature ſo ſeldom produces, and who are born with all the qualifications neceſſary to form the accompliſhed monarch. His handſome and ſtately perſon, and his noble and majeſtic air, gained him followers at firſt ſight. His eloquence, recommended by an engaging manner, was the more perſuaſive, the leſs it was artful. His enterpriſing genius formed thoſe projects which, though to the vulgar they may appear raſh,

raſh, are conſidered only as bold in the eyes of great men, and which his courage and perſeverance enabled him to accompliſh. Brave with circumſpection, and mild and gentle in a fierce and cruel age, he was as virtuous as it is poſſible for the leader of a party to be.

Guſtavus Vaſa had been the hoſtage of Chriſtian, and had been detained a priſoner contrary to the law of nations. Having found means to eſcape from priſon, he had dreſſed himſelf in the habit of a peaſant, and in that diſguiſe he wandered about in the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, where he was reduced to the neceſſity of working in the copper-mines, at once to procure a livelihood, and to conceal himſelf from his enemies. Buried, as he was, in theſe ſubterraneous caverns, he had the boldneſs to form the deſign of dethroning the tyrant. With this view he diſcovered himſelf to the peaſants, who regarded him as one of thoſe ſuperior beings to whom the common herd of mankind are naturally inclined to ſubmit. Theſe ſavage boors he ſoon improved into hardy and warlike ſoldiers. He attacked Chriſtian and the archbiſhop, beat them in ſeveral encounters, baniſhed them both from Sweden, and, at laſt, was juſtly choſen by the ſtates king of that country, of which he had been the deliverer.

Hardly was he eſtabliſhed on the throne, when he undertook an enterprize ſtill more difficult than his conqueſts. The real tyrants of the ſtate were the biſhops, who, having engroſſed into their own hands almoſt all the riches of Sweden, employed their ill-got wealth in oppreſſing the ſubjects, and in making war upon the king. This power was the more formidable, as, in the opinion of the ignorant populace, it was held to be ſacred. Guſtavus puniſhed the catholic religion for the crimes of its miniſters; and, in leſs than two years, introduced Lutheraniſm into Sweden, rather by the arts of policy than by the influence of authority. Having thus conquered the kingdom, as himſelf was wont to ſay, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned a happy and an abſolute monarch to the age of ſeventy, and then died

full of glory, leaving his family and religion in quiet poſſeſſion of the throne,

One of his deſcendents was that Guſtavus Adolphus, who is commonly called the great Guſtavus. He conquered Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verden, Wiſmar, and Pomerania, not to mention above an hundred places in Germany, which, after his death, were yielded up by the Swedes. He ſhook the throne of Ferdinand II. and protected the Lutherans in Germany, an attempt in which he was ſecretly aſſiſted by the pope himſelf, who dreaded the power of the emperor much more than the prevalence of hereſy. He it was that by his victories effectually contributed to humble the houſe of Auſtria; though the glory of that enterprize is uſually aſcribed to cardinal de Richelieu, who well knew how to procure himſelf the reputation of thoſe great actions, which Guſtavus was contented with ſimply performing. He was juſt upon the point of extending the war beyond the Danube, and perhaps of dethroning the emperor, when he was killed, in the thirty-ſeventh year of his age, at the battle of Lutzden, which he gained over Walſtein, carrying along with him to his grave the name of Great, the lamentations of the North, and the eſteem of his enemies.

His daughter Chriſtina, a lady of an extraordinary genius, was much fonder of converſing with men of learning, than of reigning over a people, whoſe knowledge was entirely confined to the art of war. She became as famous for quitting the throne as her anceſtors had been for obtaining or ſecuring it. The proteſtants have loaded her memory with many injurious aſperſions, as if it were impoſſible for a perſon to be poſſeſſed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; and the papiſts have piqued themſelves too much on the converſation of a woman who had nothing to recommend her but her taſte for philoſophy. She retired to Rome, where ſhe paſſed the reſt of her days in the midſt of thoſe arts of which ſhe was ſo paſſionately fond, and for the ſake of which ſhe had renounced a crown at twenty-ſeven years of age.

Before

Before her abdication, ſhe prevailed upon the ſtates of Sweden to elect her couſin, Charles Guſtavus X. ſon to the count palatine, and duke of Deux-Ponts, as her ſucceſſor. This prince added new conqueſts to thoſe of Guſtavus Adolphus. He preſently carried his arms into Poland, where he gained the famous battle of Warſaw, which laſted for three days. He waged a long and ſucceſsful war with the Danes; beſieged them in their capital; re-united Schonen to Sweden; and confirmed the duke of Holſtein in the poſſeſſion of Sleſwick, at leaſt for a time. At laſt, having met with a reverſe of fortune, and concluded a peace with his enemies, he turned his ambition againſt his ſubjects, and formed the deſign of eſtabliſhing a deſpotic government in Sweden. But, like the great Guſtavus, he died in the thirty-ſeventh year of his age, without being able to finiſh his project, the full accompliſhment of which was reſerved for his ſon, Charles XI.

Charles XI. was a warrior, like all his anceſtors, and more deſpotic than any of them. He aboliſhed the authority of the ſenate, which was declared to be the ſenate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was prudent, vigilant, indefatigable; qualities that muſt certainly have ſecured him the love of his ſubjects, had not his deſpotic meaſures been more apt to excite their fear than to gain their affections.

In 1680 he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter to Frederic III. king of Denmark, a princeſs eminent for her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her huſband was pleaſed to repoſe in her. Of this marriage, on the 27th of June 1682, was born king Charles XII. the moſt extraordinary man, perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. In him were united all the great qualities of his anceſtors; nor had he any other fault or failing, but that he poſſeſſed all theſe virtues in too high a degree. This is the prince whoſe hiſtory we now purpoſe to write, and concerning whoſe perſon and actions we ſhall relate nothing but what is vouched by the beſt authority.

The firſt book which was put into his hands was Puffendorff's introduction to the hiſtory of Europe, that from

from thence he might acquire an early knowledge of his own dominions, and of thoſe of his neighbours. He next learned the German language, which he continued to ſpeak for the future, with the ſame fluency as his mother-tongue. At ſeven years of age he could manage a horſe; and the violent exerciſes in which he delighted, and which diſcovered his martial diſpoſition, ſoon procured him a vigorous conſtitution, capable to ſupport the incredible fatigues which his natural inclination always prompted him to undergo.

Though gentle in his infancy, he betrayed an inflexible obſtinacy. The only way to influence him was to awaken his ſenſe of honour; by mentioning the word glory, you might have obtained any thing from him. He had a great averſion to the Latin tongue; but as ſoon as he heard that the kings of Poland and Denmark underſtood it, he learned it with great expedition, and retained ſo much of it, as to be able to ſpeak it all the reſt of his life. The ſame means were employed to engage him to learn the French; but he could never be perſuaded to make uſe of that tongue, not even with the French ambaſſadors themſelves, who underſtood no other.

As ſoon as he had acquired a tolerable knowledge of the Latin, his teacher made him tranſlate Quintus Curtius; a book for which he conceived a great liking, rather on account of the ſubject than the ſtile. The perſon who explained this author to him having aſked him what he thought of Alexander: "I think (ſaid the prince) I could wiſh to be like him." "But (reſumed the preceptor) he only lived two and thirty years." "Ah! (replied he) and is not that enough when one has conquered kingdoms?" The courtiers did not fail to carry theſe anſwers to the king his father, who would often cry out; "This child will excel me, and will even go beyond the great Guſtavus." One day he happened to be diverting himſelf in the royal apartment, in viewing two plans; the one of a town in Hungary, which the Turks had taken from the emperor; the other of Riga the capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes about a century before. Under the plan of

of the town in Hungary were written theſe words, taken from the book of Job: "The Lord hath given it to me, and the Lord hath taken it from me; bleſſed be the name of the Lord." The young prince having read this inſcription, immediately took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga; "The Lord hath given it to me, and the devil ſhall not take it from me*." Thus, in the moſt indifferent actions of his childhood, his unconquerable ſpirit would frequently diſcover ſome traces of thoſe heroic qualities which characterize great ſouls, and which plainly indicated what ſort of a man he would one day prove.

He was but eleven years of age when he loſt his mother, who expired on the fifth of Auguſt 1693. The diſeaſe of which ſhe died was ſuppoſed to be owing to the bad uſage ſhe had received from her huſband, and to her own endeavours to conceal her vexation. Charles XI. had, by means of a certain court of juſtice, which was called the chamber of Liquidations, and erected by his ſole authority, deprived a great number of his ſubjects of their wealth. Crowds of citizens ruined by this chamber, nobility, merchants, farmers, widows, and orphans, filled the ſtreets of Stockholm, and daily repaired to the gate of the palace to pour forth their unavailing complaints. The queen ſuccoured theſe unhappy people as much as lay in her power; ſhe gave them her money, her jewels, her furniture, and even her cloaths: and when ſhe had no more to give them, with tears in her eyes ſhe threw herſelf at her huſband's feet, beſeeching him to have pity on his wretched ſubjects. The king gravely anſwered her, "Madam we took you to bring us children, not to give us advice." And from that time he treated her with a ſeverity that is ſaid to have ſhortened her days.

He died four years after her, on the fifteenth of April 1697, in the forty-ſecond year of his age, and the thirty-ſeventh of his reign, at a time when the empire, Spain, and Holland, on the one ſide, and France on the other, had

* This anecdote I give from the information of two French ambaſſadors, who reſided at the court of Sweden.

had referred the deciſion of their quarrels to his arbitration, and when he had already concerted the terms of accommodation between theſe different powers.

He left to his ſon, who was then fifteen years of age, a throne well eſtabliſhed and reſpected abroad; ſubjects poor, but valiant and loyal; together with a treaſury in good order, and managed by able miniſters.

Charles XII. at his acceſſion to the throne, found himſelf the abſolute and undiſturbed maſter, not only of Sweden and Finland, but alſo of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wiſmar, Vibourg, the Iſlands of Rugen and Oeſel, and the fineſt part of Pomerania, together with the duchy of Bremen and Verden, all of them the conqueſts of his anceſtors, ſecured to the crown by long poſſeſſion, and by the ſolemn treaties of Munſter and Oliva, and ſupported by the terror of the Swediſh arms. The peace of Ryſwick, which was begun under the auſpices of the father, being fully concluded under thoſe of the ſon, he found himſelf the mediator of Europe, from the firſt moment of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen; but Charles XI. who was entirely abſolute, put off, by his laſt will the majority of his ſon to the age of eighteen. In this he favoured the ambitious views of his mother Eduiga-Eleonora of Holſtein, dowager of Charles X. who was appointed by the king her ſon, guardian to the young king her grandſon, and regent of the kingdom, in conjunction with a council of five perſons.

The regent had a ſhare in the management of public affairs during the reign of her ſon. She was now advanced in years; but her ambition, which was greater than her abilities, prompted her to entertain the pleaſing hopes of poſſeſſing authority for a long time under the king her grandſon. She kept him at as great a diſtance as poſſible from all concern with the affairs of ſtate. The young prince paſſed his time either in hunting or in reviewing his troops, and would even ſometimes exerciſe with them; which amuſement ſeemed only to be the natural effect of his youthful vivacity. He never betrayed any diſſatisfaction ſufficient to alarm the regent,

gent, who flattered herſelf that the diſſipation of mind occaſioned by theſe diverſions would render him incapable of application, and leave her in poſſeſſion of the ſupreme power for a conſiderable time.

One day in the month of November, and in the ſame year in which his father died, when he had been taking a review of ſeveral regiments, and Piper the counſellor was ſtanding by him, he ſeemed to be abſorbed in a profound reverie. "May I take the liberty (ſaid Piper to him) of aſking your majeſty what you are thinking of ſo ſeriouſly?" "I am thinking (replied the prince) that I am capable of commanding thoſe brave fellows; and I don't chuſe that either they or I ſhould receive orders from a woman." Piper immediately ſeized this opportunity of making his fortune: but, conſcious that his own intereſt was not ſufficient for the execution of ſuch a dangerous enterprize, as the removal of the queen from the regency, and the haſtening of the king's majority, he propoſed the affair to count Axel Sparre, a man of a daring ſpirit, and fond of popularity. Him he cajoled with the hopes of being the king's confident. The count readily ſwallowed the bait, and undertook the management of the whole matter, while all his labours only tended to promote the intereſt of Piper. The counſellors of the regency were ſoon drawn into the ſcheme, and forthwith proceeded to the execution of it, in order to recommend themſelves the more effectually to the king.

They went in a body to propoſe it to the queen, who little expected ſuch a declaration. The counſellors of the regency laid the matter before the ſtates-general, who were then aſſembled, and who were all unanimous in approving the propoſal. The point was carried with a rapidity that nothing could withſtand; ſo that Charles XII. had only to ſignify his deſire of reigning, and, in three days, the ſtates beſtowed the government upon him. The queen's power and credit fell in an inſtant. She afterwards led a private life, which was more ſuitable to her age, though leſs agreeable to her humour. The king was crowned on the twenty-fourth of December following. He made his entry into Stockholm

on

on a ſorrel horſe ſhod with ſilver, having a ſceptre in his hand and a crown upon his head, amidſt the acclamations of a whole people, paſſionately fond of every novelty, and always conceiving great hopes from the reign of a young prince.

The ceremony of the conſecration and coronation belongs to the archbiſhop of Upſal. This is almoſt the only privilege that remains to him of the great number that were claimed by his predeceſſors. After having anointed the prince, according to cuſtom, he held the crown in his hand, in order to put it upon his head: Charles ſnatched it from him and crowned himſelf, regarding the poor prelate all the while with a ſtern look. The people, who are always dazzled by every thing that has an air of grandeur and magnificence, applauded this action of the king. Even thoſe, who had groaned moſt ſeverely under the tyranny of the father, were fooliſh enough to commend the ſon for this inſtance of arrogance, which was a ſure pledge of their future ſlavery.

As ſoon as Charles was maſter of the kingdom, he made Piper his chief confident, entruſting him at the ſame time with the management of public affairs, and giving him all the power of a prime miniſter, without the odium of the name. A few days after he created him a count, which is a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an empty title that may be aſſumed without any manner of importance, as with us in France.

The beginning of the king's reign gave no very favourable idea of his character. It was imagined that he had been more ambitious of obtaining the ſupreme power, than worthy of poſſeſſing it. True it is, he had no dangerous paſſion; but his conduct diſcovered nothing but the ſallies of youth, and the freaks of obſtinacy. He ſeemed to be equally proud and lazy. The ambaſſadors who reſided at his court, took him even for a perſon of mean capacity, and repreſented him as ſuch to their reſpective maſters*. The Swedes entertained the ſame

* This is confirmed by original letters.

ſame opinion of him: nobody knew his real character: he did not even know it himſelf, until the ſtorm that ſuddenly aroſe in the North gave him an opportunity of diſplaying his great talents, which had hitherto lain concealed.

Three powerful princes, taking the advantage of his youth, conſpired his ruin almoſt at the ſame time. The firſt was his own couſin, Frederic IV. king of Denmark: the ſecond Auguſtus, elector of Saxony and king of Poland: Peter the Great, czar of Muſcovy, was the third, and moſt dangerous. It will be neceſſary to unfold the origin of theſe wars, which produced ſuch great events: and to begin with Denmark.

Of the two ſiſters of Charles XII. the eldeſt was married to the duke of Holſtein, a young prince of an undaunted ſpirit and of a gentle diſpoſition. The duke, oppreſſed by the king of Denmark, repaired to Stockholm with his ſpouſe, and throwing himſelf into the arms of the king, earneſtly implored his aſſiſtance. This he hoped to obtain as Charles was not only his brother-in-law, but was likewiſe the ſovereign of a people who bore an irreconcileable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient houſe of Holſtein, ſunk into that of Oldenburg, had been advanced by election to the throne of Denmark in 1449. All the kingdoms of the North were at that time elective; but the kingdom of Denmark ſoon after became hereditary. One of its kings, called Chriſtiern III. had ſuch a tender affection for his brother Adolphus, or, at leaſt, ſuch a regard for his intereſt, as is ſeldom to be met with among princes. He was deſirous of inveſting him with ſovereign power, and yet he could not diſmember his own dominions. He therefore divided with him the duchies of Holſtein-Gottorp and Sleſwick, by an odd kind of agreement, the ſubſtance of which was, that the deſcendents of Adolphus ſhould ever after govern Holſtein in conjunction with the kings of Denmark; that thoſe two duchies ſhould belong to both in common; and that the king of Denmark ſhould be able to do nothing in Holſtein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So ſtrange an union, of which, however, we have had within theſe

few

few years a ſimilar inſtance in the ſame family, was, for near the ſpace of eighty years, the ſource of perpetual diſputes between the crown of Denmark and the houſe of Holſtein-Gottorp; the kings always endeavouring to oppreſs the dukes, and the dukes to render themſelves independent. A ſtruggle of this nature had coſt the laſt duke his liberty and ſovereignty, both which, however, he recovered at the conferences of Altena in 1689, by the interpoſition of Sweden, England, and Holland, who became guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a giving way to neceſſity, till ſuch time as the ſtronger ſhall be able to cruſh the weaker, the conteſt was revived with greater virulence than ever between the new king of Denmark and the young duke. And while the duke was at Stockholm, the Danes had already committed ſome acts of hoſtility in the country of Holſtein, and had entered into a ſecret agreement with the king of Poland, to attack the king of Sweden himſelf.

Frederick Auguſtus, elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence nor negotiations, of the abbé de Polignac, nor the great qualities of the prince of Conti, his competitor for the throne, had been able to prevent from being choſen king of Poland about two years before, was a prince ſtill leſs remarkable for his incredible ſtrength of body than for his bravery and gallantry of ſoul. His court, next to that of Lewis XIV. was the moſt ſplendid of any in Europe. Never was prince more generous or munificent, or beſtowed his favours with a better grace. He had purchaſed the votes of one half of the Poliſh nobility, and overawed the other by the approach of a Saxon army. As he thought he ſhould have need of his troops in order to eſtabliſh himſelf the more firmly on the throne, he wanted a pretext for retaining them in Poland; and he therefore reſolved to employ them in attacking the king of Sweden, which he did on the following occaſion.

Livonia, the moſt beautiful and the moſt fruitful province of the North, belonged formerly to the knights of the Teutonic order. The Ruſſians, the Poles,

Poles, and the Swedes, had ſeverally diſputed the poſſeſſion of it. The Swedes had carried it from all the reſt about an hundred years ago; and it had been formally ceded to them by the peace of Oliva.

The late king Charles XI. amidſt his ſeverities to his ſubjects in general, had not ſpared the Livonians. He had ſtripped them of their privileges, and of part of their eſtates. Patkul, who unhappily hath ſince become famous for his tragical death, was deputed by the nobility of Livonia to carry to the throne the complaints of the province. He addreſſed his maſter in a ſpeech, reſpectful indeed, but bold, and full of that manly eloquence, which calamity, when joined to courage, never fail to inſpire. But kings too frequently conſider theſe public addreſſes as no more than vain ceremonies, which it is cuſtomary to ſuffer, without paying them any regard. Charles XI. however, who could play the hypocrite extremely well, when he was not hurried away by the violence of his paſſion, gently ſtruck Patkul on the ſhoulder; "You have ſpoke for your country, (ſaid he) like a brave man, and I eſteem you for it; go on." Notwithſtanding, in a few days after, he cauſed him to be declared guilty of high treaſon, and as ſuch to be condemned to death. Patkul, who had hid himſelf, made his eſcape, and carried his reſentment with him to Poland, where he was afterwards admitted into the preſence of king Auguſtus. Charles XI. was now dead; but Patkul's ſentence was ſtill in force, and his indignation ſtill unabated. He repreſented to his Poliſh majeſty the facility of conquering Livonia, the people of which were mad with deſpair, and ready to throw off the Swediſh yoke; while the king was a child, and unable to make any reſiſtance. Theſe repreſentations were well received by a prince, who already flattered himſelf with the agreeable hopes of this important conqueſt. Auguſtus had engaged at his coronation to exert his moſt vigorous efforts, in order to recover the provinces which Poland had loſt; and he imagined, that, by making an irruption into Livonia, he ſhould at once pleaſe the people, and eſtabliſh his own power; in both which particulars,

lars, however promiſing of ſucceſs, he at laſt found himſelf fatally diſappointed. Every thing was ſoon got ready for a ſudden invaſion, which he reſolved to make without having recourſe to the vain formalities of declarations of war and manifeſtoes. The ſtorm thickened, at the ſame time, on the ſide of Muſcovy. The monarch who governed that kingdom, merits the attention of poſterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, czar of Ruſſia, had already made himſelf formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the reduction of Aſoph, which opened to him the dominion of the Black Sea. But it was by actions ſtill more glorious than even his victories, that he aſpired to the name of Great. Muſcovy, or Ruſſia, comprehends the northern parts of Aſia and of Europe, and from the frontiers of China extends, for the ſpace of fifteen hundred leagues, to the borders of Poland and Sweden. This immenſe country, however, was hardly known to Europe, before the time of the czar Peter. The Muſcovites were leſs civilized than the Mexicans, when diſcovered by Cortez: born the ſlaves of maſters as barbarous as themſelves, they were ſunk into a ſtate of the moſt profound ignorance, into a total want of all the arts and ſciences, and into ſuch an inſenſibility of that want, as effectually ſuppreſſed every exertion of induſtry. An antient law, which they held to be ſacred, forbad them, under pain of death, to leave their native country without permiſſion of their patriarch. This law, made with a view to preclude them from all opportunities of becoming ſenſible of their ſlavery, was very acceptable to a people, who, in the depth of their miſery and ignorance, diſdained all commerce with foreign nations.

The æra of the Muſcovites began at the creation of the world: they reckoned up 7207 years to the beginning of the laſt century, without being able to aſſign any reaſon for this computation. The firſt day of their year anſwered to the thirteenth of our month of November. The reaſon they alledge for this regulation is, that it is probable that God created the world in autumn, the ſeaſon when the fruits of the earth are in

in their full maturity. Thus, the only appearance of knowledge which they had was founded upon groſs errors; not one of them ever dreamed that the autumn of Muſcovy might poſſibly be the ſpring of another country, ſituated in an oppoſite climate. Nor is it long ſince the people at Moſcow were going to burn the ſecretary of a Perſian ambaſſador, who had foretold an eclipſe of the ſun. They did not ſo much as know the uſe of figures; but in all their computations made uſe of little beads ſtrung upon braſs-wires. They had no other manner of reckoning in their compting-houſes, not even in the treaſury of the czar.

Their religion was, and ſtill is, that of the Greek church, intermixed with many ſuperſtitious rites, to which they are more ſtrongly attached, in proportion as they are the more ridiculous, and their burden the more intolerable. Few Muſcovites would venture to eat a pigeon, becauſe the Holy Ghoſt is painted in the form of a dove. They regularly obſerved four lents in the year; and during thoſe times of abſtinence, they never preſumed to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worſhip, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the laſt was as unbounded as the people's ignorance. He pronounced ſentences of death, aud inflicted the moſt cruel puniſhments, without any poſſibility of an appeal from his tribunal. Twice a-year he made a ſolemn proceſſion on horſe-back, attended by all his clergy in order. The czar on foot held the bridle of his horſe, and the people proſtrated themſelves bofore him in the ſtreets, as the Tartars do before their grand lama. Confeſſion was in uſe among them; but it was only in caſes of the greateſt crimes. In theſe abſolution was neceſſary, but not repentance. They thought themſelves pure in the ſight of God, as ſoon as they received the benediction of their papas. Thus they paſſed, without remorſe, from confeſſion to theft and murder; and what among other Chriſtians is a reſtraint from vice, with them was an encouragement to wickedneſs. On a faſt-day, they would not even venture to drink milk; but on a feſtival, maſters of families,

lies, prieſts, married women and maids, would make no ſcruple to intoxicate themſelves with brandy. However, there were religious diſputes among them as well as in other countries; but their greateſt controverſy was, whether laymen ſhould make the ſign of the croſs with two fingers or with three. One Jacob Nurſoff, in the preceding reign, had raiſed a ſedition in Aſtracan about this very quarrel. There were even ſome fanatics among them, as there are in thoſe civilized nations where every one is a theologian; and Peter, who always carried juſtice to the extreme of cruelty, cauſed ſome of theſe wretched creatures, who were called Voſko-jeſuits, to be committed to the flames.

The czar, in his vaſt dominions, had many other ſubjects who were not Chriſtians. The Tartars, inhabiting the Weſtern coaſts of the Caſpian Sea and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans; the Siberians, the Oſtiacks, and the Samoides, who lie towards the Frozen Sea, were ſavages, ſome of whom were idolaters, and others had not the leaſt knowledge of a God; and yet the Swedes, who were ſent priſoners among them, were better pleaſed with their manners than with thoſe of the antient Muſcovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education that tended ſtill more to encreaſe the barbarity of this part of the world. His natural diſpoſition led him to careſs ſtrangers, before he knew what advantages he might derive from their acquaintance. Le Fort, as hath been already obſerved, was the firſt inſtrument he employed to change the face of affairs in Muſcovy. His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had hitherto checked but not deſtroyed, broke forth all of a ſudden. He reſolved to be a man, to command men, and to create a new nation. Many princes before him had renounced crowns, wearied out with the intolerable load of public affairs; but no man had ever diveſted himſelf of the royal character, in order to learn the art of governing better: this was a ſtretch of heroiſm which was reſerved for Peter the Great alone.

He left Muſcovy in 1698, having reigned as yet but two years, and went to Holland, diſguiſed under a common

common name, as if he had been a menial ſervant of that fame Mr. le Fort, whom he ſent in quality of ambaſſador-extraordinary to the ſtates-general. As ſoon as he arrived at Amſterdam, he enrolled his name among the ſhip-wrights of the admiralty of the Indies, and wrought in the yard like the other mechanics. At his leiſure hours he learned ſuch parts of the mathematics as are uſeful to a prince, fortification, navigation, and the art of drawing plans. He went into the workmen's ſhops, and examined all their manufactures: nothing could eſcape his obſervation. From thence he paſſed over into England, where having perfected himſelf in the art of ſhip-building, he returned to Holland, carefully obſerving every thing that might turn to the advantage of his country. At laſt, after two years of travel and labour, to which no man but himſelf would have willingly ſubmitted, he again made his appearance in Muſcovy, with all the arts of Europe in his train. Artiſts of every kind followed him in abundance. Then were ſeen, for the firſt time, large Ruſſian ſhips in the Baltick, and on the Black Sea and the Ocean. Stately buildings, of a regular architecture, were raiſed among the Ruſſian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houſes, and libraries. The cities were brought under a regular police. The cloaths and cuſtoms of the people were gradually changed, though not without ſome difficulty; and the Muſcovites learned by degrees the true nature of a ſocial ſtate. Even their ſuperſtitious rights were aboliſhed; the dignity of the patriarch was ſuppreſſed; and the czar declared himſelf the head of the church. This laſt enterprize, which would have coſt a prince leſs abſolute than Peter both his throne and his life, ſucceeded almoſt without oppoſition, and inſured to him the ſucceſs of all his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and a barbarous clergy, he ventured to make a trial of inſtructing them, though, by that means, he ran the riſque of rendering them formidable; but he was too conſcious of his own power to entertain any apprehenſion from that quarter. He cauſed philoſophy and theology to be taught in the

few

few monaſteries that ſtill remained. True it is, this theology ſtill ſavours of that barbarous period in which Peter civilized his people. A gentleman of undoubted veracity aſſured me, that he was preſent at a public diſputation, where the point of controverſy was, whether the practice of ſmoking tobacco was a ſin? The reſpondent alledged, that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to ſmoke, becauſe the holy ſcripture ſaith, "That that which proceedeth out of the mouth defileth a man, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him."

The monks were not ſatisfied with this reformation. Hardly had the czar erected his printing-houſes, when theſe pious drones made uſe of them to publiſh declamations againſt their ſovereign. One of them affirmed in print, that Peter was Antichriſt; and his arguments were, that he deprived the living of their beards, and allowed the dead to be diſſected in his academy. But another monk, who had a mind to make his fortune, refuted this book, and proved that Peter could not be Antichriſt, becauſe the number 666 was not to be found in his name. The libeller was broke upon the wheel, and the author of the refutation was made biſhop of Rezan.

The reformer of Muſcovy enacted a very wholeſome law, the want of which reflects diſgrace upon many civilized nations. By this law, no man engaged in the ſervice of the ſtate, no citizen eſtabliſhed in trade, and eſpecially no minor, was allowed to retire into a convent.

Peter knew of what infinite conſequence it was to prevent uſeful ſubjects from conſecrating themſelves to idleneſs, and to hinder young people from diſpoſing of their liberty, at an age when they are incapable of diſpoſing of the leaſt part of their patrimony. This law, however, ſo plainly calculated for the general intereſt of mankind, is daily eluded by the induſtry of the monks; as if they, forſooth, were gainers by peopling their convents at the expence of their country.

The czar not only ſubjected the church to the ſtate, after the example of the Turkiſh emperors, but, what was

was a more maſterly ſtroke of policy, he diſſolved a militia of much the ſame nature with that of the janiſſaries: and what the ſultans had attempted in vain, he accompliſhed in a ſhort time: he diſbanded the Ruſſian janiſſaries, who were called Strelits, and who kept the czars in ſubjection. Theſe troops, more formidable to their maſters than to their neighbours, conſiſted of about thirty thouſand foot, one half of which remained at Moſcow, while the other was ſtationed upon the frontiers. The pay of a ſtrelits was no more than four roubles a-year; but this deficiency was amply compenſated by privileges and extortions. Peter at firſt formed a company of foreigners, among whom he enrolled his own name, and did not think it below him to begin tbe ſervice in the character of a drummer, and to perform the duties of that mean office; ſo much did the nation ſtand in need of examples! By degrees he became an officer. He gradually raiſed new regiments; and, at laſt, finding himſelf maſter of a well-diſciplined army, he broke the ſtrelits, who durſt not diſobey.

The cavalry were nearly the ſame with that of Poland, or France, when this laſt kingdom was no more than an aſſemblage of fiefs. The Ruſſian gentlemen mounted horſe at their own expence, and fought without diſcipline, and ſometimes without any other arms than a ſabre or a bow, incapable of obeying, and conſequently of conquering.

Peter the Great taught them to obey, both by the example he ſet them, and by the puniſhments he inflicted; for he ſerved in the quality of a ſoldier and ſubaltern officer, and as czar he ſeverely puniſhed the boyards, that is, the gentlemen, who pretended that it was the privilege of their order not to ſerve but by their own conſent. He eſtabliſhed a regular body to ſerve the artillery, and took five hundred bells from the churches to found cannon. In the year 1714, he had thirteen thouſand braſs cannon. He likewiſe formed ſome troops of dragoons, a kind of militia very ſuitable to the genius of the Muſcovites, and to the ſize of their horſes, which are ſmall. In 1738 the Ruſſians had

thirty regiments of dragoons, conſiſting of a thouſand men each, and well accoutered.

He likewiſe eſtabliſhed the Ruſſian huſſars; and had even a ſchool of engineers, in a country where, before his time, no one underſtood the elements of geometry.

He was himſelf a good engineer; but his chief excellence lay in his knowledge of naval affairs: he was an able ſea-captain, a ſkilful pilot, a good ſailor, an expert ſhip-wright, and his knowledge of theſe arts was the more meritorious, as he was born with a great dread of the water. In his youth he could not paſs over a bridge without trembling: on all theſe occaſions he cauſed the wooden windows of his coach to be ſhut; but of this conſtitutional weakneſs he ſoon got the better by his courage and reſolution.

He cauſed a beautiful harbour to be built at the mouth of the Tanais, near Aſoph, in which he propoſed to keep a number of gallies; and ſome time after, thinking that theſe veſſels, ſo long, light, and flat, would probably ſucceed in the Baltick, he had upwards of three hundred of them built at his favourite city of Peterſburg. He ſhewed his ſubjects the method of building ſhips with fir only, and taught them the art of navigation. He had even learned ſurgery, and, in a caſe of neceſſity, has been known to tap a dropſical perſon. He was well verſed in mechanics, and inſtructed the artiſts.

Indeed the revenue of the czar, when compared to the immenſe extent of his dominions, was very inconſiderable. It never amounted to four and twenty millions of our money, reckoning the mark at about fifty livres, as we do to-day, though perhaps we may do otherwiſe to-morrow. But a man may always be accounted rich, who has it in his power to accompliſh great undertakings. It is not the ſcarcity of money that weakens a ſtate; it is the want of hands, and of men of abilities.

Ruſſia, notwithſtanding the women are fruitful and the men robuſt, is far from being populous. Peter himſelf, in civilizing his dominions, unhappily contributed to their depopulation. Frequent levies in his wars,

wars, which were long unſucceſsful; nations tranſported from the coaſts of the Caſpian Sea to thoſe of the Baltick, deſtroyed by fatigue, or cut off by diſeaſes; three fourths of the Muſcovite children dying of the ſmall-pox, which is more dangerous in thoſe climates than in any other; in a word, the melancholy effects of a government ſavage for a long time, and even barbarous in its policy; to all theſe cauſes it is owing, that in this country, comprehending ſo great a part of the continent, there are ſtill vaſt deſerts. Ruſſia, at preſent, is ſuppoſed to contain five hundred thouſand families of gentlemen; two hundred thouſand lawyers; ſomething more than five millions of citizens and peaſants, who pay a ſort of tax; ſix hundred thouſand men who live in the provinces conquered from the Swedes; the Coſſacks in the Ukraine, and the Tartars that are ſubject to Muſcovy, do not exceed two millions: in fine, it appears that, in this immenſe country, there are not above fourteen millions of men, that is, a little more than two-thirds of the inhabitants of France.

While Peter was employed in changing the laws, the manners, the militia, and the very face of his country, he likewiſe reſolved to increaſe his greatneſs by encouraging commerce, which at once conſtitutes the riches of a particular ſtate, and contributes to the intereſt of the world in general. He reſolved to make Ruſſia the centre of trade between Aſia and Europe. He determined to join the Duna, the Volga, and the Tanais, by canals, of which he drew the plans; and thus to open a new paſſage from the Baltick to the Euxine and Caſpian Seas, and from theſe ſeas to the Northern Ocean.

The port of Archangel, frozen up for nine months in the year, and which could not be entered without making a long and dangerous circuit, he did not think ſufficiently commodious. From the year 1700, he had formed a deſign of building a fort upon the Baltic Sea, that ſhould become the magazine of the North, and of raiſing a city that ſhould prove the capital of his empire.

He was already attempting to find out a north-eaſt paſſage to China; and the manufactures of Pekin and Paris were deſigned to embelliſh his new city.

A road of 754 verſts long, running through marſhes that were to be drained, led from Moſcow to his new city. Moſt of theſe projects were executed by his own hands; and the two empreſſes, who have ſucceſſively followed him, have even improved upon his ſchemes, when they were practicable, and abandoned none but ſuch as it was impoſſible to accompliſh.

He was always travelling up and down his dominions, as much as his wars would allow him; but he travelled like a legiſlator and natural philoſopher, examining nature every where, endeavouring to correct or perfect her; ſounding with his own hands the depths of ſeas and rivers; repairing ſluices, viſiting docks, cauſing mines to be ſearched for, aſſaying metals, ordering accurate plans to be drawn, in the execution of which he himſelf aſſiſted.

He built, upon a wild and uncultivated ſpot, the imperial city of Peterſburg, which now contains ſixty thouſand houſes, and is the reſidence of a ſplendid court, where all the refined pleaſures are known and enjoyed. He built the harbour of Cronſtad, on the Neva, and St. Croix, on the frontiers of Perſia; erected forts on the Ukraine, and in Siberia; eſtabliſhed offices of admiralty at Archangel, Peterſburg, Aſtracan, and Azoph; founded arſenals, and built and endowed hoſpitals. All his own houſes were mean, and executed in a bad taſte; but he ſpared no expences in rendering the public buildings grand and magnificent.

The ſciences, which in other countries have been the ſlow product of ſo many ages, were, by his care and induſtry, imported into Ruſſia in full perfection. He eſtabliſhed an academy on the plan of the famous ſocieties of Paris and London. The Deliſles, the Bulfingers, the Hermanus's, the Bernouilles, and the celebrated Wolf, a man who excelled in every branch of philoſophy, were all invited and brought to Peterſburg at a great expence. This academy ſtill ſubſiſts; and the

the Muſcovites, at length, have philoſophers of their own nation.

He obliged the young nobility to travel for improvement, and to bring back into Ruſſia the politeneſs of foreign countries; and I have ſeen ſome young Ruſſians who were men of genius and of knowledge. Thus it was that a ſingle man changed the face of the greateſt empire in the univerſe. It is however a ſhocking reflection, that this reformer of mankind ſhould have been deficient in that firſt of all virtues, the virtue of humanity. Brutality in his pleaſures, ferocity in his manners, and cruelty in his puniſhments, ſullied the luſtres of ſo many virtues. He civilized his ſubjects, and yet himſelf remained a barbarian. He would ſometimes, with his own hands, execute ſentences of death upon the unhappy criminals; and, in the midſt of a revel, would ſhew his dexterity in cutting off heads.

There are princes in Africa, who, with their own hands, ſhed the blood of their ſubjects; but theſe kings are always deteſted as barbarians The death of a ſon, whom he ought to have corrected, or at moſt diſinherited, would render the memory of Peter the object of univerſal hatred, were it not that the great and many bleſſings he beſtowed upon his ſubjects, were almoſt ſufficient to excuſe his cruelty to his own off-ſpring.

Such was the czar Peter; and his great projects were little more than in embrio when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark againſt a child whom they all deſpiſed. The founder of the Ruſſian empire was ambitious of being a conqueror; and ſuch he thought he might eaſily become by the proſecution of a war, which, being entered into with ſo much prudence, could not fail, he imagined, of proving advantageous to his ſubjects: the art of war was a new art, which it was neceſſary to teach his people.

Beſides, he wanted a port on the eaſt ſide of the Baltick, to facilitate the execution of all his ſchemes. He wanted the province of Ingria, which lies to the north-eaſt of Livonia. The Swedes were in poſſeſſion of it, and from thence he reſolved to take it by force. His

predeceſſors had had claims upon Ingria, Eſtonia, and Livonia; and the preſent ſeemed a favourable opportunity for reviving theſe claims, which had lain buried for a hundred years, and had been cancelled by the ſanction of treaties. He therefore made a league with the king of Poland, to wreſt from young Charles XII. all the territories that are bounded by the gulph of Finland, the Baltic Sea, Poland, and Muſcovy.

THE

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK II.

THE CONTENTS.

A ſudden and ſurpriſing Change in the Character of CHARLES XII. at eighteen Years of Age: he undertakes a War againſt DENMARK, POLAND, and MUSCOVY: finiſhes the DANISH War in ſix Weeks: with eight thouſand SWEDES defeats eighty thouſand RUSSIANS; and then penetrates into POLAND. A Deſcription of POLAND, and its Form of Goverment. CHARLES gains ſeveral Battles; becomes Maſter of POLAND, where he prepares to nominate a King.

IN this manner did three powerful ſovereigns menace the infancy of Charles XII. The news of theſe preparations ſtruck the Swedes with conſternation, and alarmed the council. All the great generals were now dead; and every thing was to be feared under the reign of a young king, who had hitherto given

no very favourable impreſſions of his character. He hardly ever aſſiſted at the council; and when he did, it was only to ſit croſs-legged on the table, abſent, inattentive, and ſeemingly regardleſs of every thing that paſſed.

The council happened to hold a deliberation in his preſence concerning the dangerous ſituation of affairs; ſome of the members propoſed to avert the ſtorm by negociations, when all on a ſudden Charles roſe with an air of gravity and aſſurance, like a man of ſuperior conſequence who has choſen his ſide: "Gentlemen, ſaid he, I am reſolved never to begin an unjuſt war, nor ever to finiſh a juſt one but by the deſtruction of my enemies. My reſolution is fixed. I will attack the firſt that ſhall declare againſt me; and, after having conquered him, I hope I ſhall be able to ſtrike terror into the reſt." All the old counſellors were aſtoniſhed at this declaration, and looked at one another without daring to reply. Agreeably ſurpriſed to find their king poſſeſſed of ſuch noble ſentiments, and aſhamed to be leſs ſanguine in their expectations than he, they received his orders for the war with admiration.

They were ſtill more ſurpriſed when they ſaw him at once bid adieu to the moſt innocent amuſements of youth. The moment he began to make preparations for the war, he entered on a new courſe of life, from which he never afterwards deviated in one ſingle inſtance. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæſar, he propoſed to imitate thoſe two conquerors in every thing but their vices. No longer did he indulge himſelf in magnificence, ſports, and recreations: he reduced his table to the moſt rigid frugality. He had formerly been fond of gaiety and dreſs; but from that time he was never clad otherwiſe than a common ſoldier. He was ſuppoſed to have entertained a paſſion for a lady of his court: whether there was any foundation for this ſuppoſition does not appear; certain it is, he ever after renounced all commerce with women, not only for fear of being governed by them, but likewiſe to ſet an example of continence to his ſoldiers, whom he reſolved to confine within the ſtricteſt diſcipline; perhaps too

too from the vanity of being thought the only king that could conquer a paſſion ſo difficult to be overcome. He likewiſe determined to abſtain from wine during the reſt of his life. Some people have told me, that his only reaſon for taking this reſolution was to ſubdue his vicious inclinations in every thing, and to add one virtue more to his former ſtock; but the greater number have aſſured me, that it was to puniſh himſelf for a riot he had committed, and an affront he had offered to a lady at table, even in preſence of the queen-mother. If that be true, this condemnation of his own conduct, and this abſtinence which he impoſed upon himſelf during the remainder of his life, is a ſpecies of heroiſm no leſs worthy of admiration *.

He began by aſſuring the duke of Holſtein, his brother-in-law, of a ſpeedy aſſiſtance. Eight thouſand men were immediately ſent into Pomerania, a province bordering upon Holſtein, in order to enable the duke to make head againſt the Danes. The duke indeed had need of them. His dominions were already laid waſte, the caſtle of Gottorp taken, and the city of Tonningen preſſed by an obſtinate ſiege, to which the king of Denmark was come in perſon, in order to enjoy a conqueſt, which he held to be certain. This ſpark began to throw the empire into a flame. On the one ſide the Saxon troops of the king of Poland, thoſe of Brandenburgh, Wolfenbuttle, and Heſſe Caſſel, advanced to join the Danes. On the other, the king of Sweden's eight thouſand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three Dutch regiments, came to the aſſiſtance of the duke. While the little country of Holſtein was thus the theatre of war, two ſquadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, appeared in the Baltick. Theſe two ſtates were guarantees of the treaty of Altena, which the Danes had broke, and were eager to aſſiſt the duke of Holſtein, becauſe it was for the intereſt of their trade to check the growing power of the king of Denmark. They knew, that

* If we may judge from the whole tenour of his life and character, he had in fact no tenderneſs in his nature.

ſhould he once become maſter of the Sound, he would impoſe the moſt rigorous laws upon the commercial nations, as ſoon as he ſhould be able to do it with impunity. This conſideration has long induced the Engliſh and the Dutch to maintain, as much as they can, a balance of power between the princes of the North. They joined the young king of Sweden, who ſeemed to be in danger of being cruſhed by ſuch a powerful combination of enemies, and aſſiſted him for the very ſame reaſon that the others attacked him; namely, becauſe they thought him incapable of defending himſelf.

He was taking the diverſion of boar-hunting, when he received the news of the Saxons having invaded Livonia. This paſtime he enjoyed in a manner equally new and dangerous. No other weapons were uſed but ſharp-pointed ſticks, with which the hunters defended themſelves behind a cord ſtretched between two trees. A boar of a huge ſize came ſtraight againſt the king, who, after a long ſtruggle, by the help of the cord and ſtick, levelled him with the ground. It muſt be acknowledged, that in reading of ſuch adventures as theſe, in conſidering the ſurpriſing ſtrength of king Auguſtus, and reviewing the travels of the czar, we are almoſt tempted to think that we live in the times of Hercules and Theſeus.

Charles ſet out for his firſt campaign on the eighth day of May, new ſtile, in the year 1700, and left Stockholm, whither he never returned. An innumerable company of people attended him to the port of Carelſcroon, offering up their prayers for his ſafety, bedewing the ground with their tears, and expreſſing their admiration of his virtue. Before he left Sweden, he eſtabliſhed at Stockholm a council of defence, compoſed of ſeveral ſenators, who were to take care of whatever concerned the navy, the army, and the fortifications of the country. The body of the ſenate were proviſionally to regulate every thing beſides, in the interior government of the kingdom. Having thus ſettled the adminiſtration of public affairs, and freed his mind from every other care, he devoted himſelf intirely to war. His fleet conſiſted of three and forty veſſels: that

that in which he ſailed, named the King Charles, and the largeſt ſhip that had ever been ſeen, was a ſhip of an hundred and twenty guns. Count Piper, his firſt miniſter, general Renſchild, and the count de Guiſcard, the French ambaſſador in Sweden, embarked along with him. He joined the ſquadrons of the allies The Daniſh fleet declined the combat, and gave the three combined fleets an opportunity of approaching ſo near to Copenhagen, as to throw ſome bombs into it.

Certain it is, it was the king himſelf that firſt propoſed to general Renſchild to make a deſcent, and to beſiege Copenhagen by land, while it ſhould be blocked up by ſea. Renſchild was ſurpriſed to receive a propoſal that diſcovered as much prudence as courage, from ſuch a young and unexperienced prince. Every thing was ſoon got ready for the deſcent. Orders were given for the embarkation of five thouſand men, who lay upon the coaſt of Sweden, and who were joined to the troops they had on board. The king quitted his large ſhip and went into a frigate, and they then began to diſpatch towards the ſhore three hundred grenadiers in ſmall ſhallops. Among the ſhallops were ſome flat-bottomed boats that carried the faſcines, the chevaux de frize, and the inſtruments of the pioneers. Five hundred choſen men followed in other ſhallops. Laſt of all came the king's men of war, with two Engliſh and two Dutch frigates, which were to favour the landing of the troops under cover of their cannon.

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is ſituated in the iſle of Zealand, in the midſt of a beautiful plain, having the Sound on the north-eaſt, and on the eaſt the Baltic, where the king of Sweden then lay. At the unexpected movement of the veſſels, which threatened a deſcent, the inhabitants were ſtruck with conſternation. Alarmed at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swediſh ſhips, they looked round with terror, to obſerve where the ſtorm would fall. Charles's fleet ſtopped over againſt Humblebeck, within ſeven miles of Copenhagen. In that place the Danes immediately drew up their cavalry. Their foot were poſted

poſted behind thick entrenchments; and what artillery they could bring thither, was pointed againſt the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate, to throw himſelf into the firſt ſhallop, at the head of his guards. The French ambaſſador being always at his ſide, "Sir, ſaid the king to him, in Latin, (for he would never ſpeak French,) you have no quarrel with the Danes, you need go no farther, if you pleaſe." Sir, anſwered the count de Guiſcard, in French, the king my maſter hath ordered me to attend your majeſty. I hope you will not this day baniſh me from your court, which never before appeared ſo ſplendid." So ſaying, he gave his hand to the king, who leaped into the ſhallop, whither he was followed by count Piper and the ambaſſador. They advanced under ſhelter of the cannon of the ſhips that favoured the landing. The ſmall boats were ſtill about three hundred paces from the ſhore. Charles, impatient to land, jumped into the ſea, ſword in hand, the water reaching above his waiſt. His miniſters, the French ambaſſador, the officers and ſoldiers, immediately followed his example, and marched up to the ſhore, amidſt a ſhower of muſket-ſhot from the enemy. The king, who had never in his life before heard a diſcharge of muſkets loaded with ball, aſked major Stuart, who ſtood next him, what meant that whiſtling which he heard. "It is the noiſe of the muſket-balls, which they fire upon you," replied the major. "Very well, ſays the king, henceforward that ſhall be my muſic." At that inſtant the major received a ſhot in his ſhoulder, and a lieutenant on the other ſide of him fell dead at his feet.

It is uſual for troops that are attacked in their trenches to be beat; becauſe the aſſailants have always an impetuoſity of courage, which the defenders cannot have; and beſides, to wait for the enemy in our lines is frequently a confeſſion of our own weakneſs, and of their ſuperiority. The Daniſh horſe and foot took to their heels, after a feeble reſiſtance. The king having become maſter of their intrenchments, fell upon his knees to return thanks to God for the firſt ſucceſs of his

his arms. He forthwith cauſed redoubts to be raiſed towards the town, and himſelf marked out the place for the encampment. Mean while he ſent back his veſſels to Schonen, a port of Sweden bordering upon Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thouſand men. Every thing conſpired to favour the ardour of Charles's courage. The nine thouſand men were upon the ſhore ready to embark, and next day a favourable wind brought them ſafe to the place of their deſtination.

All this paſſed within ſight of the Daniſh fleet, who durſt not venture to advance. Copenhagen, ſtruck with terror, immediately ſent deputies to the king, beſeeching him not to bombard the city. He received them on horſeback, at the head of his regiment of guards; and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He exacted from the citizens four hundred thouſand rix-dollars, commanding them, at the ſame time, to ſupply his camp with all kinds of proviſions, for which he aſſured them they ſhould be honeſtly paid. They brought the proviſions, becauſe they durſt not diſobey; but they little expected that conquerors would condeſcend to pay for them; and thoſe who brought them were ſurpriſed to find that they were generouſly and inſtantly paid, even by the meaneſt ſoldier in the army. There had long prevailed among the Swediſh troops a ſtrict diſcipline, which had greatly contributed to the ſucceſs of their arms; and the king rendered it ſtill more rigid. No ſoldier durſt refuſe to pay for what he had bought, ſtill leſs to go a plundering, nor even ſo much as to go out of the camp. What is more, he would not allow his troops, after a victory, to ſtrip the bodies of the dead, until they had obtained his permiſſion; and he eaſily brought them to the obſervance of this injunction. Prayers were regularly ſaid in his camp twice a day; at ſeven in the morning and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to attend them himſelf, in order to give his ſoldiers an example of piety as well as of valour. His camp, which was better regulated than Copenhagen, had egery thing in abundance; the peaſants chooſing much rather to ſell their proviſions to their enemies the Swedes, than to the Danes,

Danes, who did not pay them ſo well. Even the citizens were more than once obliged to come to the Swediſh camp to purchaſe thoſe proviſions which they could not find in their own markets.

The king of Denmark was then in Holſtein, whither he ſeemed to have gone for no other purpoſe than to raiſe the ſiege of Tonningen. He ſaw the Baltic covered with the enemies ſhips, and a young conqueror already maſter of Zealand, and juſt upon the point of taking poſſeſſion of his capital. He cauſed an edict to be publiſhed throughout all his dominions, promiſing liberty to every one that ſhould take up arms againſt the Swedes. This declaration was of great weight in a country which was formerly free, but where all the peaſants, and even many of the citizens, are now-a-days ſlaves. Charles ſent word to the king of Denmark, that his only intention in making war was to oblige him to come to a peace; and that he muſt either reſolve to do juſtice to the duke of Holſtein, or ſee Copenhagen levelled with the ground, and his dominions laid waſte with fire and ſword. The Dane was too happy in having to do with a conqueror who valued himſelf on his regard to juſtice. A congreſs was held in the town of Travendal, which lies on the frontiers of Holſtein. The king of Sweden would not allow the negociations to be protracted by the arts of miniſters; but determined to have the treaty finiſhed with the ſame rapidity with which he had made his deſcent upon Zealand. In effect, a peace was concluded, on the fifth of Auguſt, to the advantage of the duke of Holſtein, who was indemnified for all the expences of the war, and delivered from oppreſſion. The king of Sweden, fully ſatisfied with having ſuccoured his ally, and humbled his enemy, would accept of nothing for himſelf. Thus Charles XII. at eighteen years of age, began and finiſhed this war in leſs than ſix weeks.

Exactly at the ſame time the king of Poland inveſted Riga, the capital of Livonia; and the czar was advancing on the eaſt, at the head of near an hundred thouſand men. Riga was defended by the old count d'Alberg, a Swediſh general, who, at the age of eighty,

ty, joined all the fire of youth to the experience of ſixty campaigns. Count Flemming, afterwards miniſter of Poland, a man of diſtinguiſhed abilities as well in the field as the cabinet, and Patkul the Livonian, puſhed the ſiege with great vigour, under the direction of the king; but notwithſtanding ſeveral advantages which the beſiegers had gained, the experience of old count d'Alberg baffled all their efforts, and the king of Poland began to deſpair of being able to take the town. At laſt he laid hold of an honourable pretext for raiſing the ſiege. Riga was full of merchants goods belonging to the Dutch. The ſtates-general ordered their ambaſſador at the court of Auguſtus, to repreſent the matter to his majeſty. The king of Poland did not long reſiſt their importunities, and agreed to raiſe the ſiege, rather than occaſion the leaſt damage to his allies, who were not greatly ſurpriſed at this ſtretch of complaiſance, to the real cauſe of which they were no ſtrangers.

The only thing that Charles had now to do, towards the finiſhing of his firſt campaign, was to march againſt his rival in glory, Peter Alexowitz. He was the more exaſperated againſt him, as there were ſtill at Stockholm three Muſcovite ambaſſadors, who had lately ſworn to the renewal of an inviolable peace. Poſſeſſed, as he was himſelf of the moſt incorruptible integrity, he could not conceive how a legiſlator, like the czar, ſhould make a jeſt of what ought to be held ſo ſacred. The young prince, whoſe ſenſe of honour was extremely refined, never imagined that there could be one ſyſtem of morality for kings, and another for private perſons. The emperor of Muſcovy had juſt publiſhed a manifeſto, which he had much better have ſuppreſſed. He there alledged, as the reaſon of the war, the little reſpect that had been ſhewn him when he went incognito to Riga, and the extravagant prices his ambaſſadors had been obliged to pay for proviſions. Such were the mighty injuries for which he ravaged Ingria, with eighty thouſand men!

At the head of this great army he appeared before Narva, on the firſt of October, a ſeaſon more ſevere in

that

that climate than the month of January is at Paris. The czar, who in ſuch weather would ſometimes ride poſt for four hundred leagues, to ſee a mine or a canal, was not more ſparing of his troops than of himſelf. He knew, moreover, that the Swedes, ever ſince the time of Guſtavus Adolphus, could make war in the depth of winter as well as in ſummer; and he wanted to accuſtom the Ruſſians likewiſe to forget all diſtinction of ſeaſons, and to render them, one day, equal to the Swedes. Thus, in a time when froſt and ſnow compel other nations in more temperate climates to agree to a ſuſpenſion of arms, the czar Peter beſieged Narva, within thirty degrees of the pole, and Charles XII. advanced to its relief. The czar was no ſooner arrived before the place, than he immediately put in practice what he had learned in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all ſides, raiſed redoubts at certain diſtances, and opened the trenches himſelf. He had given the command of his troops to the duke de Croix, a German, and an able general, but who at that time was little aſſiſted by the Ruſſian officers. As for himſelf he had no other rank in the army than that of a private lieutenant. He thereby gave an example of military obedience to his nobility, hitherto unacquaintd with diſcipline, and accuſtomed to march at the head of ill-armed ſlaves, without experience and without order. There was nothing ſtrange in ſeeing him who had turned carpenter at Amſterdam, in order to procure himſelf fleets, ſerve as lieutenant at Narva, to teach his ſubjects the art of war.

The Muſcovites are ſtrong and indefatigable, and perhaps as courageous as the Swedes; but it requires time and diſcipline to render troops warlike and invincible. The only regiments that could be depended upon were commanded by ſome German officers; but their number was very inconſiderable. The reſt were barbarians forced from their foreſts, and covered with the ſkins of wild beaſts; ſome armed with arrows, and others with clubs. Few of them had fuſees; none of them had ever ſeen a regular ſiege; and there was not one good cannoneer in the whole army. An hundred and fifty cannon,

cannon, which one would have thought muſt have ſoon reduced the little town of Narva to aſhes, were hardly able to make a breach, while the artillery of the city mowed down at every diſcharge whole ranks of the enemy in their trenches. Narva was almoſt without fortifications: the baron de Hoorn, who commanded there, had not a thouſand regular trrops; and yet this immenſe army could not reduce it in ten weeks.

It was now the fifth of November, when the czar learned that the king of Sweden had croſſed the ſea with two hundred tranſports, and was advancing to the relief of Narva. The Swedes were not above twenty thouſand ſtrong. The czar had no advantage but that of numbers. Far therefore from deſpiſing his enemy, he employed every art in order to cruſh him. Not content with eighty thouſand men, he reſolved to oppoſe to him another army ſtill, and to check his progreſs at every ſtep. He had already given orders for the march of about thirty thouſand men, who were advancing from Pleſkow with great expedition. He then took a ſtep that would have rendered him contemptible, could a legiſlator who had performed ſuch great and glorious actions incur that imputation. He left his camp, where his preſence was neceſſary, to go in queſt of this new army, which might have arrived well enough without him, and ſeemed by this conduct to betray his fear of engaging in his entrenchments a young and unexperienced prince who might come to attack him.

Be that as it will, he reſolved to ſhut up Charles XII. between two armies. Nor was this all: a detachment of thirty thouſand men from the camp before Narva were poſted at a league's diſtance from the city, directly in the king of Sweden's road: twenty thouſand ſtrelits were placed farther off, upon the ſame road; and five thouſand others compoſed an advanced guard; and he muſt neceſſarily force his way through all theſe troops before he could reach the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and double foſſé. The king of Sweden had landed at Pernaw, in the gulph of Riga, with about ſixteen thouſand foot, and little more than four thouſand horſe. From Pernaw he made a flying march

to

to Revel, followed by all his cavalry, and only by four thouſand foot. He always marched in the van of his army, without waiting for the rear. He ſoon found himſelf, with his eight thouſand men only, before the firſt poſts of the enemy. He immediately reſolved, without the leaſt heſitation, to attack them, one after another, before they could poſſibly learn with what a ſmall number they had to engage. The Muſcovites ſeeing the Swedes come upon them, imagined they had a whole army to encounter. The advanced guard of five thouſand men, poſted among rocks, a ſtation where one hundred reſolute men might have ſtopped the march of a large army, fled at their firſt approach. The twenty thouſand men that lay behind them, perceiving the flight of their fellow ſoldiers, took the alarm, and carried their terror and confuſion with them into the camp. All the poſts were carried in two days; and what upon other occaſions would have been reckoned three diſtinct victories, did not retard the king's march for the ſpace of one hour. He appeared then at laſt with his eight thouſand men, exhauſted by the fatigues of ſo long a march, before a camp of eighty thouſand Muſcovites, defended by a hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; and, ſcarce allowing his troops any time for reſt, he inſtantly gave orders for the attack.

The ſignal was two fuſees, and the word in German, "With the aid of God." A general officer having repreſented to him the greatneſs of the danger, "What, ſays he, do not you think that with my eight thouſand brave Swedes, I may eaſily beat eighty thouſand Ruſſians?" But ſoon after, fearing that what he had ſaid might ſavour too much of gaſconade, he ran after the officer, "And are not you ſays he of the ſame opinion? have not I a double advantage over the enemy? one, that their cavalry can be of no ſervice to them; the other, that the place being narrow, their number will only incommode them; and thus in reality I ſhall be ſtronger than they." The officer did not care to differ from him; and thus they marched againſt the Muſcovites about mid-day, on the 30th of November 1700.

As

As ſoon as their cannon had made a breach in their intrenchments, the Swedes advanced with ſcrewed bayonets, having a furious ſhower of ſnow on their backs, which drove full in the face of the enemy. The Ruſſians ſtood the ſhock for half an hour, without flinching. The King made his attack upon the right of the camp, where the czar's quarters lay, hoping to come to a rencounter with him, as he did not know that he had gone in queſt of the forty thouſand men, who were daily expected to arrive. At the firſt diſcharge of the enemy's muſkets, he received a ſhot in his neck; but as it was a ſpent ball, it lodged in the folds of his black neckcloath, and did him no harm. His horſe was killed under him. Mr. de Spar told me, that the king mounted another horſe with great agility, ſaying, "Theſe fellows make me go through my exerciſe;" and continued to fight and give orders with the ſame preſence of mind. After an engagement of three hours, the entrenchments were forced on all ſides. The king purſued the right of the enemy as far as the river Narva, with his left wing; if we may be allowed to call by that name about four thouſand men, who were in purſuit of near forty thouſand. The bridge broke under the fugitives, and the river was immediately filled with dead carcaſes. The reſt returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went; and finding ſome barracks, they took poſt behind them. There they defended themſelves for a while, as they were not able to make their eſcape; but at laſt their generals Dolgorouky, Gollofkin, and Federowitz, ſurrendered themſelves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet; and while they were preſenting them to him, the duke de Croi came up and ſurrendered himſelf with thirty officers.

Charles received all theſe priſoners of diſtinction with as much civility and politeneſs as if he had been paying them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He detained none but the general officers. All the ſubalterns and common ſoldiers were diſarmed and conducted to the river Narva, where they were ſupplied with boats for paſſing over, and allowed to return to their own country. In the mean time night came on, and the

right

right wing of the Muſcovites ſtill continued the fight. The Swedes had not loſt above ſix hundred men. Eight thouſand Muſcovites had been killed in their intrenchments; many were drowned; many had croſſed the river; and yet there ſtill remained in the camp a ſufficient number to cut off the Swedes to the laſt man. But the loſs of battles is not ſo much owing to the number of the killed, as to the timidity of thoſe who ſurvive. The king employed the ſmall remains of the day in ſeizing upon the enemy's artillery. He took poſſeſſion of an advantageous poſt between the camp and the city, where he ſlept a few hours upon the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, intending, at day-break, to fall upon the left wing of the enemy, which was not yet entirely routed. But at two o'clock in the morning, general Wade, who commanded that wing, having heard of the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and of his having diſmiſſed all the ſubaltern officers and ſoldiers, ſent a meſſenger to him, begging he would grant him the ſame favour. The conqueror replied, that he ſhould have it, provided he would come at the head of his troops, and make them lay their arms and colours at his feet. Soon after the general appeared with his Muſcovites, to the number of about thirty thouſand. They marched, both ſoldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, through leſs than ſeven thouſand Swedes. The ſoldiers, as they paſſed the king, threw their guns and ſwords upon the ground, and the officers preſented him with their enſigns and colours. He cauſed the whole of this multitude to be conducted over the river, without detaining a ſingle ſoldier. Had he kept them, the number of priſoners would at leaſt have been five times greater than that of the conquerors.

After this, he entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the duke de Croi, and other general officers of the Muſcovites. He ordered their ſwords to be reſtored to them all; and knowing that they wanted money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he ſent a thouſand ducats to the duke de Croi, and five hundred to every Muſcovite officer, who could

uld not ſufficiently admire the civility of this treat-
ent, of which they were incapable of forming the
aſt conception. An account of the victory was imme-
ately drawn up at Narva, in order to be ſent to Stock-
olm, and to the allies of Sweden; but the king ex-
anged with his own hand every circumſtance in the re-
tion that tended too much to his own honour, or
emed to reflect upon the czar. His modeſty however
uld not hinder them from ſtriking at Stockholm ſeve-
l medals to perpetuate the memory of theſe events.
mong others they ſtruck one which repreſented the
ng on one ſide, ſtanding on a pedeſtal, to which were
ained a Muſcovite, a Dane, and a Polander; and on
e reverſe a Hercules, holding his club, and treading
pon a Cerberus, with this inſcription: *Tres uno contu-
it ictu.*

Among the priſoners taken at the battle of Narva,
ere was one whoſe fate exhibited a remarkable in-
ance of the great inconſtancy of fortune. He was the
deſt ſon and heir of the king of Georgia; his name
e czarafis Artſchelou. This title of czarafis, among
e Tartars, as well as in Muſcovy, ſignifies prince, or
n of the czar; for the word czar, or tſar, ſignified
ng among the ancient Scythians, from whom all theſe
eople are deſcended, and is not derived from the Cæſars
f Rome, ſo long unknown to theſe barbarians. His
ther Mettelleſki, czar, and maſter of the moſt beauti-
l part of the country, lying between the mountains of
rarat and the eaſtern coaſts of the Black Sea, having
een expelled from his kingdom by his own ſubjects, in
688, had rather choſen to throw himſelf into the arms
f the emperor of Muſcovy, than to apply to the Turks
r aſſiſtance. His ſon, a youth of nineteen years of
ge, followed Peter the great in his expedition againſt
e Swedes, and was taken fighting by ſome Finland
ldiers, who had already ſtripped him, and were upon
e point of killing him. Count Renſchild reſcued him
om their hands, ſupplied him with cloaths, and pre-
nted him to his maſter. Charles ſent him to Stock-
olm, where the unfortunate prince died in a few years
ter. The king, upon ſeeing him depart, could not help
making,

making, in the hearing of his officers, a very natural reflection on the ſtrange fate of an Aſiatic prince, born at the foot of Mount Caucaſus, and going to live priſoner among the ſnows of Sweden. "It is juſt, ſays he, as if I were one day to be a priſoner among the Crim Tartars." Theſe words made no impreſſion at that time; but, in the ſequel, there was but too much occaſion to remember them, when the event had proved them to be a prediction.

The czar was advancing, by long marches, with a body of forty thouſand Ruſſians, in full hopes of ſurrounding his enemy on all ſides; but before he had proceeded half way, he received intelligence of the battle of Narva, and of the diſperſion of his whole army. He was not ſo fooliſh as to think of attacking with his forty thouſand raw and undiſciplined troops, a conqueror who had lately defeated eighty thouſand men in their entrenchments. He returned home, with a determined reſolution of diſciplining his troops, at the ſame time that he civilized his ſubjects. "I know, ſays he, that the Swedes will teach us to beat them." Moſcow, his capital, was in the utmoſt terror and conſternation at the news of this defeat. Such was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they actually imagined they had been conquered by a power more than human, and that the Swedes were ſo many magicians. This opinion was ſo general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. Nicholas, the patron of Muſcovy, on the occaſion. The form of theſe prayers is too ſingular to be omitted. It runs thus:

"O thou, who art our perpetual comforter in all our adverſities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what ſin have we offended thee, in our ſacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thankſgivings, that thou haſt thus abandoned us? We implored thy aſſiſtance againſt the terrible, inſolent, enraged, dreadful, unconquerable deſtroyers, when, like lions and bears robbed of their young, they fell upon, terrified, wounded, and ſlew, by thouſands, us who are thy people. As it is impoſſible that this ſhould have happened without ſorcery and witchcraft, we beſeech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to

be our champion and ſtandard bearer, to deliver us from this troop of ſorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompenſe they deſerve."

While the Muſcovites were thus complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared himſelf for new victories.

The king of Poland had reaſon to fear, that his enemy, already victorious over the Danes and the Muſcovites, would ſoon turn his arms againſt him. He entered into a cloſer alliance with the czar than ever he had done before. Theſe two princes agreed upon an interview, in order to concert their meaſures. They met at Birſen, a ſmall town in Lithuania, without any of thoſe formalities which ſerve only to retard buſineſs, and neither ſuited their ſituation nor their humour. The princes of the North viſit one another with a familiarity that has not yet taken place in the more ſouthern parts of Europe. Peter and Auguſtus ſpent fifteen days together, in the enjoyment of pleaſures, which were even ſomewhat extravagant; for the czar, amidſt his cares for the reformation of his ſubjects, could never correct his dangerous propenſion to debauchery.

The king of Poland engaged to furniſh the czar with fifty thouſand German troops, which were to be hired from ſeveral princes, and for which the czar was to pay. Peter, on the other hand, was to ſend fifty thouſand Ruſſians into Poland, to learn the art of war, and promiſed to pay to Auguſtus three millions of rix dollars in two years. This treaty, had it been carried into execution, might have proved fatal to the king of Sweden: it was a ſure and ready method of rendering the Muſcovites good ſoldiers: perhaps it was forging chains for a part of Europe.

Charles XII. exerted his utmoſt endeavours to prevent the king of Poland from reaping any benefit from this league. After having paſſed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia in the neighbourhood of Riga, the very town which Auguſtus had in vain beſieged. The Saxon troops were poſted along the river Duna, which is very broad in that place: and Charles who lay

on

on the other ſide of the river, was obliged to diſpute the paſſage. The Saxons were not commanded by their own prince, who was then ſick, but were headed by Marſhal Stenau, who acted as general, under whom commanded prince Ferdinand duke of Courland, and that ſame Patkul, who had formerly, at the hazard of his life, vindicated the privileges of his country, againſt Charles XI. by his pen, and now defended the ſame cauſe againſt Charles XII. by his arms. The king of Sweden had cauſed ſome large boats to be built of a new conſtruction, whoſe ſides were much higher than ordinary, and could be raiſed or let down, like a draw-bridge. When raiſed they covered the troops on board, and when let down they ſerved as a bridge to land them. He likewiſe made uſe of another artifice. Having obſerved that the wind blew from the north, where he lay, to the ſouth, where the enemy were encamped, he ſet fire to a large heap of wet ſtraw, which diffuſing a thick ſmoak over the river, prevented the Saxons from ſeeing his troops, or obſerving what he was going to do. Under cover of this cloud, he diſpatched ſome barks filled with more of the ſame ſmoking ſtraw; ſo that the cloud always encreaſing, and being driven by the wind directly to the face of the enemy, rendered it impoſſible for them to know whether the king was paſſing or not. Mean while, he alone conducted the execution of his ſtratagem; and when he had reached the middle of the river, "Well, ſays he to general Renſchild, the Duna will be as favourable to us as the ſea of Copenhagen; take my word for it, general, we ſhall beat them." He arrived at the other ſide in a quarter of an hour, and was ſorry to find that he was only the fourth perſon that leapt on ſhore. He forthwith landed his cannon, and drew up his troops in order of battle, while the enemy, blinded with ſmoak, could make no oppoſition, except by a few random ſhot. At laſt the miſt being diſperſed by the wind, the Saxons ſaw the king of Sweden already advancing againſt them.

Mareſchal Stenau loſt not a moment. As ſoon as he obſerved the Swedes, he ruſhed upon them with the flower

flower of his cavalry. The violent ſhock of this body falling upon the Swedes juſt as they were forming, threw them into confuſion. They gave way, were broken, and purſued even into the river. The king of Sweden rallied them in a moment, in the midſt of the water, with as much compoſure as if he had been making a review; then the Swedes, marching more compact than before, repulſed mareſchal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau, finding his troops begin to ſtagger, acted like an able general. He made them retire into a dry place, flanked with a moraſs and a wood, where his artillery lay. The advantage of the ground, and the time which the Saxons had thus obtained, of recovering from their firſt ſurprize, reſtored to them their former courage. Charles immediately began the attack. He had fifteen thouſand men: Stenau and the duke of Courland about twelve thouſand, with no other artillery than one diſmounted cannon. The battle was obſtinate and bloody. The duke had two horſes killed under him: he penetrated thrice into the heart of the king's guards; but at length being unhorſed by a blow with the but-end of a muſket, his army was thrown into confuſion, and no longer diſputed the victory. His cuiraſſiers carried him off with great difficulty, all bruiſed, and half dead, from the thickeſt of the fight, and from under the horſes' heels, which trampled on him.

Immediately after this victory, the king of Sweden advanced to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of the duchy ſurrendered to him at diſcretion: it was rather a journey than a conqueſt. From thence he paſſed without delay into Lithuania, conquering wherever he came: and he felt a pleaſing ſatisfaction, as he himſelf owned, when he entered triumphant into the town of Birſen, where the king of Poland and the czar had plotted his deſtruction but a few months before.

It was in this place that he formed the deſign of dethroning the king of Poland, by the hands of the Poles themſelves. One day when he was at table, full of this enterprize, and obſerving as uſual, the ſtricteſt

temperance, wrapped up in a profound ſilence, and ſeeming, as it were, abſorbed in the greatneſs of his conceptions, a German colonel who waited upon him, ſaid with an audible voice, that the meals which the czar and the king of Poland had made in the ſame place were ſomewhat different from thoſe of his majeſty. "Yes, ſays the king, riſing, and I ſhall the more eaſily "ſpoil their digeſtion." In ſhort, by intermixing a little policy with the force of his arms, he reſolved to haſten the execution of this mighty project.

Poland, a part of the ancient Sarmatia, is ſomewhat larger than France, but leſs populous, though it is more ſo than Sweden. The inhabitants were converted to Chriſtianity only about ſeven hundred and fifty years ago. It is ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that the Roman language, which never penetrated into that country, is now-a-days, ſpoken in common no where but in Poland; there every one ſpeaks Latin, even the very ſervants. This extenſive country is very fertile; but the natives are only, on that account, ſo much the leſs induſtrious. The artiſts and tradeſmen in Poland, are Scotch, French, and eſpecially Jews. The laſt have, in this country, near three hundred ſynagogues; and multiplying too faſt, and to too great numbers, they will in time be baniſhed from it, as they have already been from Spain. They buy the corn, the cattle, and the commodities of the country at a low rate, diſpoſe of them at Dantzick, and in Germany, and ſell to the nobles at a high price, wherewithal to gratify the only ſpecies of luxury which they know and love. Thus Poland, watered with the fineſt rivers in the world, rich in paſtures, and in mines of ſalt, and covered with luxuriant crops, remains poor, in ſpite of its plenty; becauſe the people are ſlaves, and the nobles are proud and indolent.

The conſtitution of Poland is the moſt perfect model of the ancient government of the Goths and Celtæ, which hath been corrected or altered every where elſe. It is the only ſtate that has preſerved the name of republic together with the royal dignity.

Every

Every gentleman has a right to give his vote in the election of a king, and may even be elected himself. This ineſtimable privilege is attended with inconveniencies proportionably great. The throne is almoſt always expoſed to ſale; and as a Polander is ſeldom able to make the purchaſe, it has frequently been ſold to ſtrangers. The nobility and clergy defend their liberties againſt the king, and deprive the reſt of the nation of theirs. The body of the people are ſlaves. Such is the unhappy fate of mankind, that in every country the greater number are, one way or other, enſlaved by the leſſer. There the peaſant ſows not for himſelf, but for his lord, to whom his perſon, his lands, and even the labour of his hands belong; and who can ſell him, or cut his throat with the ſame impunity as he kills the beaſts in the field. Every gentleman is independent. He cannot be tried in a criminal cauſe but by an aſſembly of the whole nation: he cannot be arreſted till once he is condemned; ſo that he is hardly ever puniſhed. There are great numbers of poor among them. Theſe engage in the ſervice of the more wealthy, receive wages from them, and perform the meaneſt offices. They rather chuſe to ſerve their equals, than to enrich themſelves by commerce; and, while they are dreſſing their maſters horſes, they give themſelves the title of electors of kings and deſtroyers of tyrants.

To ſee a king of Poland in the pomp of royal majeſty, one would take him to be the moſt abſolute prince in Europe; and yet he is the leaſt ſo. The Poles really make with him that contract, which in other nations is only ſuppoſed to be made between the king and the ſubjects. The king of Poland, even at his conſecration, and in ſwearing to the *Pacta conventa*, abſolves his ſubjects from the oath of allegiance, ſhould he ever violate the laws of the republic.

He nominates to all offices, and confers all honours. Nothing is hereditary in Poland, but the lands and rank of the nobility. The ſon of a palatine, or of a king, has no claim to the dignity of his father. But there is this great difference betwixt the king and the republic, that the former cannot ſtrip any perſon of an office after

he has beſtowed it upon him; whereas the latter may deprive him of the crown, if he tranſgreſs the laws of the ſtate.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, frequently ſell their votes, but ſeldom their affections. They have no ſooner elected a king, than they begin to fear his ambition, and to oppoſe him by their cabals. The grandees, whom he has made, and whom he cannot unmake, often become his enemies, inſtead of remaining his creatures. Thoſe who are attached to the court are hated by the reſt of the nobility, which always forms two parties; a diviſion unavoidable, and even neceſſary in thoſe countries, that muſt needs have kings, and yet preſerve their liberties.

Whatever concerns the nation is regulated in the aſſemblies of the ſtates-general, which are called diets. Theſe ſtates are compoſed of the body of the ſenate, and of ſeveral gentlemen. The ſenators are the palatines and the biſhops: the gentlemen the deputies of the particular diets in each palatinate. In theſe great aſſemblies preſides the archbiſhop of Gneſna, primate of Poland, viceroy of the kingdom during an interregnum, and, next to the king, the firſt perſon in the ſtate. Beſides him there is ſeldom any other cardinal in Poland; becauſe the Roman purple giving no precedence in the ſenate a biſhop who ſhould be made a cardinal, would be obliged either to take his rank as ſenator, or to renounce the ſubſtantial rights of the dignity he enjoys in his own country, to ſupport the vain pretenſions of a foreign honour.

Theſe diets, by the laws of the kingdom, muſt be held alternately in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies frequently tranſact their buſineſs ſabre in hand, like the ancient Sarmatians, from whom they are ſprung, and ſometimes too intoxicated with liquor, a vice to which the Sarmatians were utter ſtrangers. Every gentleman deputed to the ſtates-general enjoys the ſame right which the tribunes of the people had at Rome, of oppoſing themſelves to the laws of the ſenate. Any one gentleman, who ſays, "I proteſt," ſtops by that ſingle

ſingle word, the unanimous reſolution of all the reſt; and if he quits the place where the diet is held, the aſſembly is of courſe diſſolved.

To the diſorders ariſing from this law, they apply a remedy ſtill more dangerous. Poland is ſeldom without two factions. Unanimity in their diets being rendered thus impoſſible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by a plurality of voices, without any regard to the proteſtation of the leſſer number. Theſe aſſemblies, condemned by the laws, but authoriſed by cuſtom, are held in the king's name, though frequently without his conſent, and even againſt his intereſt; in much the ſame manner as the league in France made uſe of the name of Henry III. to ruin him; and as the parliament in England, that brought Charles I. to the block, began by prefixing his majeſty's name to all the reſolutions they took to deſtroy him. When the public commotions are ended, it belongs to the general diets either to confirm or repeal the acts of theſe confederacies. A diet can even cancel the acts of a former diet; for the ſame reaſon that, in abſolute monarchies, a king can aboliſh the laws of his predeceſſor, or even thoſe which have been made by himſelf.

The nobility, who make the laws of the republic, likewiſe conſtitute its ſtrength. They appear on horſeback, completely armed, upon great emergencies, and are able to make up a body of an hundred thouſand men. This great army, which is called poſpolite, moves ſlowly, and is ill governed. It cannot continue aſſembled for any length of time, for want of proviſions and forage: it has neither diſcipline, ſubordination, nor experience; but that love of liberty by which it is animated will always make it formidable.

Theſe nobles may be conquered, or diſperſed, or even held in ſubjection for a time; but they ſoon ſhake off the yoke. They compare themſelves to the reeds, which the ſtorm may bend to the ground, but which riſe again the moment the ſtorm is over. It is for this reaſon that they have no places of ſtrength: they will have themſelves to be the only bulwarks of the republic, nor do they ever ſuffer their king to build any

ſorts, leſt he ſhould employ them leſs for their defence than their oppreſſion. Their country is intirely open, excepting two or three frontier places; ſo that if in a war, whether civil or foreign, they reſolve to ſuſtain a ſiege, they are obliged to raiſe fortifications of earth, in a hurry, to repair the old walls that are half ruined, and to enlarge the ditches that are almoſt filled up; and the town is commonly taken before the entrenchments are finiſhed.

The poſpolite are not always on horſeback to defend their country: they never mount but by order of the diets, or ſometimes in imminent dangers, by the ſimple orders of the king.

The uſual guard of Poland is an army, which ought to be maintained at the expence of the republic. It is compoſed of two bodies, under two grand generals. The firſt body is that of Poland, and ſhould conſiſt of thirty-ſix thouſand men; the ſecond, to the number of twelve thouſand, is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other: though nominated by the king, they are accountable for their conduct to the republic alone, and have an unlimited power over their troops. The colonels are abſolute maſters of their regiments; and it is their buſineſs to maintain and pay them as well as they can. But as they are ſeldom paid themſelves, they ravage the country, ruin the peaſants, to ſatisfy their own avidity, and that of their ſoldiers. The Poliſh lords appear in theſe armies with more magnificence than they do in the towns; and their tents are more elegant than their houſes. The cavalry, which makes up two-thirds of the army, is compoſed almoſt entirely of gentlemen; and is remarkable for the beauty of their horſes, and the richneſs of the accoutrements and harneſs.

The gendarmes eſpecially, whom they diſtinguiſh into huſſars and pancernes, never march without ſeveral valets in their retinue, who lead their horſes; thoſe are furniſhed with bridles that are ornamented with plates and nails of ſilver, embroidered ſaddles, ſaddle-bows, and gilt ſtirrups, or ſtirrups made of maſſy ſilver, with large houſings trailing on the ground, after the manner

of

of the Turks, whoſe magnificence the Poles endeavour to imitate as much as they can.

But if the cavalry are fine and gorgeous, the infantry were at that time proportionably wretched, ill cloathed, and ill armed, without regimentals, or any thing uniform. Such at leaſt was their condition, till towards the year 1710: and yet theſe infantry, who reſemble the wandering Tartars, ſupport hunger, cold, fatigue, and all the hardſhips of war with ſurpriſing reſolution.

One may ſtill diſcern in the Poliſh ſoldiers the character of their anceſtors, the ancient Sarmatians, the ſame want of diſcipline, the ſame fury in the aſſault, the ſame readineſs to fly and to return to the charge, and the ſame cruel diſpoſition to ſlaughter when they conquer.

The king of Poland flattered himſelf at firſt, that in this preſſing neceſſity, theſe two bodies would ſupport his cauſe; that the Poliſh poſpolite would take up arms at his orders; and that theſe forces, joined to the Saxon ſubjects, and to his Ruſſian allies, would compoſe an army, before which the ſmall number of the Swedes would not dare to appear. But he found himſelf, almoſt in an inſtant, deprived of theſe ſuccours by means of that very eagerneſs he diſcovered to have them all at once.

Accuſtomed, in his hereditary dominions, to the exerciſe of abſolute power, he too fondly imagined that he might govern in Poland as he did in Saxony. The beginning of his reign raiſed malecontents. His firſt proceedings provoked the party that had oppoſed his election, and alienated almoſt all the reſt of the nation. The Poles murmured to ſee the towns filled with Saxon garriſons, and their frontiers lined with Saxon troops. This nation, more anxious to preſerve its liberty, than to attack its neighbours, conſidered the war with Sweden, and the irruption into Livonia, as enterprizes by no means advantageous to the republic. It is very difficult to hinder a free people from ſeeing their true intereſt. The Poles were ſenſible, that if this war, undertaken without their conſent, ſhould prove unſucceſsful, their country, open on all ſides, would become a

prey to the king of Sweden; and that, ſhould it be crowned with ſucceſs, they would be enſlaved by their own king, who being maſter of Livonia, as well as of Saxony, would ſhut up Poland between theſe two ſtates. In this alternative, either of becoming ſlaves to the king, whom they had elected, or of being pillaged by Charles XII. who was juſtly incenſed, they raiſed a clamour againſt the war, which they believed to be declared rather againſt themſelves than againſt Sweden. They conſidered the Saxons and the Muſcovites as the forgers of their chains; and obſerving ſoon after that the king of Sweden had overcome every thing that oppoſed his progreſs, and was advancing with a victorious army into the heart of Lithuania, they loudly exclaimed againſt their ſovereign, and with ſo much the greater freedom as he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was at that time divided into two parties, that of the princes of Sapieha, and that of Oginſky. The animoſity between theſe two factions, occaſioned at firſt by private quarrels, had at laſt been inflamed into a civil war. The king of Sweden engaged the princes of Sapieha in his intereſt; and Oginſky being poorly ſupported by the Saxons, found his party almoſt annihilated. The Lithuanian army, reduced by theſe troubles and the want of money to an inconſiderable number, was partly diſperſed by the conquerors. The few that ſtill held out for the king of Poland were ſeparated into ſmall bodies of fugitive troops, who wandered up and down the country, and ſubſiſted by ſpoil. Auguſtus beheld nothing in Lithuania but the weakneſs of his own party, the hatred of his ſubjects, and an hoſtile army, conducted by a young king, incenſed, victorious, and implacable.

There was indeed an army in Poland; but inſtead of ſix and thirty thouſand men, the number preſcribed by the law, it did not amount to eighteen thouſand; and it was not only ill-paid and ill-armed, but the generals were as yet undetermined what courſe to take.

The only reſource of the king was, to order the nobility to follow him; but he durſt not expoſe himſelf to the mortification of a refuſal, which, by diſcovering his weakneſs

weakneſs too plainly, would of conſequence have encreaſed it.

In this ſtate of trouble and uncertainty, all the palatinates of the kingdom deſired the king to call a diet; in the ſame manner as in England, during times of danger, all the bodies of the ſtate preſent addreſſes to the ſovereign, entreating him to convoke a parliament. Auguſtus had more need of an army than a diet, in which the actions of kings are ſeverely canvaſſed. However, that he might not incenſe the nation beyond a poſſibility of reconciliation, he found it neceſſary to aſſemble a diet; which was accordingly appointed to be held at Warſaw, on the ſecond of December 1701. He ſoon perceived that Charles XII. had, at leaſt, as much power in this aſſembly as himſelf. Thoſe who favoured the Sapieha, the Lubomirſky and their friends, the palatine Leczinſky, treaſurer of the crown, and eſpecially the partizans of the princes Sobieſky, were all of them ſecretly attached to the king of Sweden.

The moſt conſiderable of theſe partizans, and the moſt dangerous to the king of Poland, was cardinal Radjouſky, archbiſhop of Gneſna, primate of the kingdom, and preſident of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and cunning, and entirely under the influence of an ambitious woman, who was called by the Swedes madam Cardinaleſs, and who was inciting him on to intrigue and faction. King John Sobieſky, the predeceſſor of Auguſtus, had firſt made him biſhop of Warmia and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radjouſky, when no more than a biſhop, had obtained the cardinal's hat by the favour of the ſame prince. This dignity ſoon opened his way to the primacy; and thus by uniting in his own perſon whatever can impoſe upon mankind, he was able to undertake the moſt arduous enterprizes, without incurring the leaſt danger.

After the death of John, he employed all his intereſt to raiſe prince James Sobieſky to the throne; but the torrent of public hatred ran ſo ſtrong againſt the father, notwithſtanding the eminent qualities of which he was poſſeſſed, that it entirely excluded the ſon from that

dignity. After this, the cardinal-primate joined his endeavours with thoſe of the abbé de Polignac, the French ambaſſador, to procure the crown to the prince of Conti, who was actually elected. But the money and troops of Saxony defeated all his negociations. At laſt he ſuffered himſelf to be drawn over to the party that crowned the elector of Saxony, and patiently waited for an opportunity of ſowing diſſention between the new king and the nation.

The victories of Charles XII. the protector of prince James Sobiesky, the civil war in Lithuania, the general alienation of men's minds from king Auguſtus; all theſe circumſtances made the cardinal-primate believe, that the time was now come when he might ſafely ſend back Auguſtus into Saxony, and open for king John's ſon the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the hatred of the Poles, was now become their darling, ever ſince the time that Auguſtus had loſt the public favour; but he durſt not as yet entertain the moſt diſtant hopes of ſo great a revolution, of which, however, the cardinal was already laying the foundation.

At firſt he ſeemed deſirous of effecting a reconciliation between the king and the republic; and diſpatched circular letters, dictated in appearance by the ſpirit of charity and concord; a common and well known ſnare, in which, however, the people are always caught. He wrote an affecting letter to the king of Sweden, conjuring him, in the name of that Saviour whom all Chriſtians adore, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. anſwered the intentions of the cardinal rather than his words. Mean while he remained with his victorious army in the great duchy of Lithuania, declaring, that he would not diſturb the diet; that he made war againſt Auguſtus and the Saxons, and not againſt the Poles; and that, far from attacking, he came only to deliver them from oppreſſion. Theſe letters and theſe anſwers were calculated for the public. The emiſſaries that were continually going and coming between the cardinal and count Piper, and the ſecret meetings held at the prelate's houſe, were the ſprings that

that regulated the motions of the diet. They propoſed to diſpatch an embaſſy to Charles XII. and unanimouſly required of the king, that he ſhould bring no more Muſcovites upon their frontiers, and that he ſhould ſend back his Saxon troops.

The bad fortune of Auguſtus had already done what the diet demanded of him. The league, ſecretly concluded with the Muſcovites at Birſen, was now become as uſeleſs as it had once appeared formidable. He was far from being able to ſend to the czar the fifty thouſand Germans, whom he had promiſed to raiſe in the empire. The czar himſelf, a dangerous neighbour to Poland, was in no haſte to aſſiſt a divided kingdom, from whoſe misfortunes he hoped to derive ſome advantage. He contented himſelf with ſending twenty thouſand Muſcovites into Lithuania, who did more miſchief than the Swedes, flying every where before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles; till at laſt being purſued by the Swediſh generals, and finding no more to pillage, they returned in ſhoals to their own country. With regard to the ſhattered remains of the Saxon army that was beat at Riga, Auguſtus ſent them to winter and recruit in Saxony; hoping by this ſacrifice, involuntary as it was, to regain the affection of the Poles, who were ſo highly incenſed againſt him.

The war now was turned into intrigues. The diet was ſplit into almoſt as many factions as there were palatines. One day the intereſts of king Auguſtus prevailed; the next they were diſregarded. Every one called out for liberty and juſtice; and yet no one knew what was liberty and juſtice. The time was ſpent in private cabals and public harangues. The diet neither knew what they would be at, nor what they ought to do. Great companies ſeldom ſteer the right courſe in times of public commotions; becauſe the factious are bold, and the virtuous are commonly diffident. The diet broke up in a tumultuous manner, on the 17th of February 1702, after having ſpent three months in cabals, without coming to any fixed reſolution. The ſenators, conſiſting of the palatines and biſhops, remained at Warſaw. The ſenate of Poland has a right

of

of making laws provisionally, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being less numerous, and accustomed to business, was far less tumultuous, and decided with greater dispatch.

They decreed that the embassy, which was proposed in the diet, should be sent to the king of Sweden; and that the polpolite should take to arms, and hold themselves in readiness at all events. They made several regulations for quelling the commotions in Lithuania, and for diminishing the authority of the king, though less to be dreaded than that of Charles XII.

Augustus rather chose to receive hard laws from his conqueror than from his subjects. He resolved to sue for a peace to the king of Sweden, and to conclude a secret treaty with that monarch. This was a step which he was obliged to conceal from the senate, whom he considered as an enemy still more untractable than Charles. As the affair was of a very delicate nature, he entrusted it to the countess of Konigsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, to whom he was at that time attached. This is the lady whose brother became so famous by his unfortunate death, and whose son commanded the French armies with so much glory and success. Celebrated as she was for her wit and beauty, she was more capable than any minister of bringing a negociation to a happy period. Moreover, as she had an estate in the dominions of Charles XII. and had resided a long time at his court, she had a very plausible pretext for waiting upon him. Accordingly she repaired to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and immediately applied to count Piper, who too rashly promised her an audience of his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her the most amiable woman in Europe, possessed the happy talent of speaking the languages of several countries she had never seen, with as much ease and propriety as if she had been a native. She even amused herself sometimes in writing French verses, which one might have easily mistaken for the production of a person born at Versailles. Those which she composed on Charles XII. are not beneath the dignity

nity of hiſtory to mention. She introduced the heathen gods praiſing him for his different virtues. The piece concluded thus:

Enfin, chacun des Dieux diſcourant à ſa gloire,
Le plaçait par avance au Temple de Mémoire;
Mais Venus ni Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.

The hero's acts while other gods proclaim,
And praiſe, and promiſe him immortal fame;
Silent ſit Bacchus and the queen of love.

All her wit and charms were loſt upon ſuch a man as the king of Sweden, who conſtantly refuſed to ſee her. She therefore reſolved to throw herſelf in his way, as he rode out to take the air, which he frequently did. In this attempt ſhe at laſt ſucceeded. She met him one day in a very narrow path; and, the moment ſhe obſerved him, came down from her coach. The king made her a low bow, without ſpeaking a word to her, turned about his horſe, and rode back in an inſtant. And thus the only advantage, which the counteſs of Konigſmark gained from her journey, was the pleaſure of ſeeing that the king of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The king of Poland was therefore obliged to throw himſelf into the arms of the ſenate. He made them two propoſals, which were laid before them by the palatinate of Marienburg; the one, that they ſhould leave to him the diſpoſal of the republic, in which caſe he would engage to pay the ſoldiers two quarters advance out of his own revenue; the other, that they ſhould allow him to bring back twelve thouſand Saxons into Poland. The cardinal primate returned him an anſwer as ſevere as the king of Sweden's refuſal. He told the palatine of Marienburg, in the name of the aſſembly, "That they had reſolved to ſend an embaſſy to Charles XII. and that he would not adviſe him to bring back any Saxons."

In this extremity, the king was deſirous of preſerving at leaſt the appearance of the royal authority. He ſent

ſent one of his chamberlains to wait upon Charles, and to learn from him where, and in what manner, his Swediſh majeſty would be pleaſed to receive the embaſſy of the king his maſter, and of the republic. Unhappily they had forgot to aſk from the Swedes a paſſport for the chamberlain. The king of Sweden, inſtead of giving an audience, cauſed him to be thrown into priſon, ſaying, "That he expected to receive an embaſſy from the republic, and not from Auguſtus."

After this, Charles having left garriſons in ſome towns in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a city well known in Europe for the diets that are held there, but ill built, and worſe fortified.

A few miles on the other ſide of Grodno, he met the embaſſy of the republic, which conſiſted of five ſenators. They deſired, in the firſt place, to have the ceremony of their introduction properly regulated, a thing with which the king was utterly unacquainted. They demanded, that the ſenate ſhould be complimented with the title of Moſt Serene, and that the coaches of the king and ſenators ſhould be ſent to meet them. They were told in anſwer, "That the republic ſhould be ſtiled Illuſtrious, and not Moſt Serene; that the king never uſed any coaches; that he had plenty of officers in his retinue, but no ſenators; that a lieutenant-general ſhould be ſent to meet them; and that they might come on their own horſes."

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with ſome appearance of military grandeur. Their converſation was full of caution and reſerve. They ſaid they were afraid of Charles XII. and did not love Auguſtus; but that it would be a ſhame for them to take the crown, in obedience to the orders of a ſtranger, from the head of that prince whom they had elected. Nothing was finally concluded; and Charles XII. gave them to underſtand, that he would ſettle all diſputes at Warſaw.

His march was preceded by a manifeſto, which the cardinal and his party ſpread over Poland in the ſpace of eight days. By this writing, Charles invited all the Poles to join him in revenging their own quarrel, and endeavoured to perſuade them that his intereſt and

theirs were the ſame. They were, however, very different; but the manifeſto, ſupported by a powerful army, by the diſorder of the ſenate, and by the approach of the conqueror, made a deep impreſſion on the minds of the people. They were obliged to own Charles for their protector, becauſe he was reſolved to be ſo; and happy was it for them, that he contented himſelf with this title.

The ſenators who oppoſed Auguſtus publiſhed this manifeſto aloud, even in the royal preſence. The few who adhered to him obſerved a profound ſilence. At length, intelligence being brought that Charles was advancing by long marches, every one prepared to depart in a hurry. The cardinal left Warſaw among the firſt. The greateſt part fled with precipitation; ſome retired to their country-ſeats, there to wait the unravelling of this perplexed and intricate affair; others went to arm their friends. Nobody remained with the king but the ambaſſadors of the emperor and the czar, the pope's nuncio, and a few biſhops and palatines who were attached to his fortunes. He was forced to fly, though nothing as yet decided in his favour. Before his departure, he haſtened to hold a council with the ſmall body of ſenators who ſtill repreſented the ſenate. Zealous as theſe were for his intereſt, they were nevertheleſs Poles; they had all conceived ſuch an utter averſion to the Saxon troops, that they durſt not grant him a liberty of recalling more than ſix thouſand of them for his defence; and they even voted that theſe ſix thouſand ſhould be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and be immediately ſent back upon the concluſion of a peace. The armies of the republic they left entirely to his diſpoſal.

After this decree of the ſenate, the king left Warſaw, too weak to reſiſt his enemies, and but little ſatisfied even with the conduct of his friends. He immediately publiſhed orders for aſſembling the poſpolite and the two armies, which were little more than empty names. He had nothing to hope for in Lithuania, of which the Swedes were in poſſeſſion. The army of Poland, reduced to an handful of men, was in want of arms and

proviſions,

proviſions, and had no great inclination to the war. Moſt of the nobility, intimidated, irreſolute, and diſaffected, remained at their country-ſeats. In vain did the king, authorized by the laws of the land, command every gentleman, under pain of death, to take up arms and follow him. It was even become a problematical point whether or not they ought to obey him. His chief dependence was upon the troops of the electorate, where the form of government being wholly deſpotic, he was under no apprehenſions of being diſobeyed. He had already given ſecret orders for the march of twelve thouſand Saxons, who were advancing with great expedition. He likewiſe recalled the eight thouſand men whom he had promiſed to the emperor in his war againſt France, and whom the neceſſity of his affairs now obliged him to withdraw. To introduce ſo many Saxons into Poland, was, in effect, to alienate the affections of all his ſubjects, and to violate the law made by his own party, which allowed only of ſix thouſand. But he well knew, that, if he proved victorious, they would not dare to complain, and if he ſhould be conquered, they would never forgive him for having introduced even the ſix thouſand. While the ſoldiers were arriving in troops, and while he was flying from one palatinate to another, and aſſembling the nobility who adhered to him, the king of Sweden reached Warſaw, on the 5th of May, 1702. The gates were opened to him at the firſt ſummons. He diſmiſſed the Poliſh garriſon, diſbanded the city-guard, poſted guards of his own in all the convenient places, and ordered the inhabitants to deliver up their arms. Satisfied with having diſarmed them, and unwilling to provoke them by any unneceſſary ſeverities, he demanded a contribution of no more than one hundred thouſand livres. Auguſtus was then aſſembling his forces at Cracow; and was greatly ſurpriſed to ſee the cardinal primate arrive among the reſt. This man affected to maintain the decorum of his character to the laſt, and to dethrone his king with all the appearance of the moſt reſpectful behaviour. He gave him to underſtand that the king of

Sweden

Sweden ſeemed very well inclined to come to a reaſonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave to wait upon that monarch. Auguſtus granted him what he could not refuſe, that is, the liberty of hurting himſelf.

The cardinal-primate immediately repairing to the king of Sweden, before whom he had not as yet ventured to appear. He ſaw him at Praag, not far from Warſaw, but without any of thoſe ceremonies which had been obſerved in introducing the ambaſſadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarſe blue cloth, with gilt braſs buttons, jack-boots, and buff-ſkin gloves that reached up to his elbows. He was in a room without hangings, attended by the duke of Holſtein, count Piper his firſt miniſter, and ſeveral general officers. The king advanced a few ſteps to meet the cardinal; they talked together ſtanding for about a quarter of an hour; Charles put an end to the conference, by ſaying aloud, "I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected a new king." The cardinal, who expected ſuch a declaration, cauſed it to be immediately notified to all the palatinates, aſſuring them that he was extremely ſorry for it, but repreſented to them, at the ſame time, the abſolute neceſſity they were under of complying with the conqueror's requeſt.

Upon receiving this intelligence, the king of Poland plainly perceived that he muſt either loſe his crown, or preſerve it by a battle; and he exerted his utmoſt efforts in order to ſucceed in the deciſion of this important quarrel. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he ſtill remained, came in a body to offer him their ſervice. He exhorted them to remember the oaths they had taken; and they promiſed to ſhed the laſt drop of their blood in ſupport of his cauſe. Strengthened by theſe ſuccours, and by the troops which bore the name of the army of the crown, he went, for the firſt time, in queſt of the king of Sweden; nor was he long in finding him; for that prince was already advancing towards Cracow.

The

The two kings met on the 13th of July 1702, in a ſpacious plain near Cliſſau, between Warſaw and Cracow. Auguſtus had near four and twenty thouſand men; Charles XII. had not above twelve thouſand. The battle began by a general diſcharge of the artillery. At the firſt volley of the Saxons, the duke of Holſtein, who commanded the Swediſh cavalry, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon-ball in his reins. The king aſked if he was killed, and was anſwered in the affirmative. He made no reply: a few tears fell from his eyes: he covered his face with his hands for a moment: and then, of a ſudden, ſpurring on his horſe with all his might, he ruſhed into the thickeſt of the enemy at the head of the guards.

The king of Poland did every thing that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. Thrice in perſon did he rally his troops, and lead them up to the charge; but the Saxons only could be ſaid to fight for him: the Poles, who formed his right wing, fled to a man, at the very beginning of the battle; ſome through fear, and others thro' diſaffection. The good fortune of Charles XII. carried all before it; he gained a complete victory. He took poſſeſſion of the enemy's camp, their colours, and artillery; and Auguſtus's military-cheſt fell into his hands. He halted not a moment on the field of battle, but marched directly to Cracow, purſuing the king of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to ſhut the gates upon the conqueror. He cauſed them to be burſt open. The garriſon did not venture to fire a ſingle gun; but were driven with whips and canes into the caſtle, into which the king entered pell-mell with them. Charles obſerving an officer of the artillery going to fire a cannon, ran up to him and ſnatched the match out of his hand. The commander fell on his knees before him. Three Swediſh regiments were lodged at free quarters among the citizens, and the town was taxed with a contribution of an hundred thouſand rix-dollars. The count de Steinbock, who was appointed governor of the city, being

being informed that ſome treaſures were hid in the tombs of the Poliſh kings, in St. Nicholas' church at Cracow, cauſed them to be opened. Nothing was found there but ſome ornaments of gold and ſilver, belonging to the churches. Of theſe he took a part; and Charles XII. even ſent a golden cup to one of the Swediſh churches; an action that might have raiſed the Poliſh catholics againſt him, had any thing been able to withſtand the terror of his arms.

He left Cracow with a determined reſolution to purſue Auguſtus without intermiſſion. At the diſtance of a few miles from the city, his horſe fell and broke his thigh-bone. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow, where he remained confined to his bed for ſix weeks, in the hands of the ſurgeons. This accident gave Auguſtus a little reſpite. He forthwith cauſed it to be ſpread abroad thro' Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by the fall. This report, which gained credit for ſome time, filled the minds of all men with doubt and apprehenſion. During this interval, he aſſembled at Marienburg, and then at Lublin, all the orders of the kingdom, which had been already convoked at Sendomir. The aſſembly was very full, as few palatinates refuſed to ſend their deputies thither. He regained the affections of moſt of them by preſents and promiſes, and by that affability without which abſolute kings cannot be beloved, nor elective kings maintain themſelves on the throne. The diet were ſoon undeceived concerning the falſe report of the king of Sweden's death; but that large body was already put in motion, and ſuffered itſelf to be carried along by the impulſe it had received; all the members ſwore to continue faithful to their ſovereign: ſo ſubject to change are all great companies! Even the cardinal-primate himſelf, who ſtill pretended a regard for Auguſtus, repaired to the diet of Lublin; where he kiſſed the king's hands, and readily took the oath as well as the other members. The ſubſtance of the oath was, that they had never attempted, nor ever would attempt, any thing prejudicial to the intereſt of Auguſtus. The king excuſed the cardinal from the firſt part of the oath,

oath, and the prelate bluſhed while he ſwore to the laſt. The reſult of all the deliberations of this diet was, that the republic of Poland ſhould maintain an army of fifty thouſand men at their own expence, for the ſervice of their ſovereign; that they ſhould allow the Swedes ſix weeks time to declare whether they were for peace or war; and the ſame time to the princes of Sapieha, the original authors of the troubles of Lithuania, to come and aſk pardon from the king of Poland.

In the mean time Charles XII. being cured of his wound, overturned all their deliberations. Unalterably fixt in his reſolution of forcing the Poles to dethrone their king with their own hands, he cauſed a new aſſembly to be convoked at Warſaw, by the intrigues of the cardinal, in oppoſition to that of Lublin. His generals repreſented to him, that this negociation might poſſibly be involved in endleſs delays, and by that means be rendered ineffectual; that, in the mean time, the Muſcovites were every day becoming a more equal match for his troops which he had left in Livonia and Ingria; that the ſkirmiſhes which frequently happened between the Swedes and Ruſſians in theſe provinces did not always turn out to the advantage of the former; and, finally, that his own preſence might ſoon be neceſſary in thoſe quarters. Charles, as ſteady in the proſecution of his ſchemes, as he was briſk and vigorous in action, replied; "Should it oblige me to remain here for fifty years, I will not depart till I have dethroned the king of Poland."

He left the aſſembly of Warſaw to combat that of Lublin, by their ſpeeches and writings, and to juſtify their proceedings by the laws of the kingdom; laws always equivocal, which each party interpret according to their pleaſure, and which ſucceſs alone can render inconteſtable. As for himſelf, having reinforced his victorious troops with ſix thouſand horſe and eight thouſand foot, which he had received from Sweden, he marched againſt the remains of the Saxon army, which he had beat at Cliſſau, and which had found time to rally and recruit, while his fall from his horſe had confined

fined him to his bed. This army ſhunned his approach and retired towards Pruſſia, to the north-weſt of Warſaw. The river Bug lay between him and the enemy. Charles ſwam acroſs it at the head of his cavalry: the infantry went to look for a ford ſomewhat higher. He came up with the Saxons on the firſt of May 1703, at a place called Pulteſk. General Stenau commanded them to the number of about ten thouſand. The king of Sweden, in his precipitate march, had brought no more than the ſame number along with him, confident that a leſs number would be ſufficient. So great was the terror of his arms, that one half of the Saxon troops fled at his approach, without waiting for the battle. General Stenau, with two regiments, kept his ground for a moment; but was ſoon hurried along in the general flight of the army, which was diſperſed before it was vanquiſhed. The Swedes did not take above a thouſand priſoners, nor kill above ſix hundred men, having more difficulty in purſuing than in defeating the enemy.

Auguſtus having now nothing left him but the ſhattered remains of his Saxons, who were every where defeated, retired in haſte to Thorn, an ancient city of Royal Pruſſia, ſituated on the Viſtula, and under the protection of the Poles. Charles immediately prepared to beſiege it. The king of Poland, not thinking himſelf ſecure in this place, withdrew from it, and flew into every corner of Poland, where he could poſſibly find any ſoldiers, and into which the Swedes had not as yet penetrated. Mean while Charles, amidſt ſo many rapid marches, ſwimming acroſs rivers, and hurried along with his infantry mounted behind his cavalry, had not been able to bring up his cannon to Thorn; he was therefore obliged to wait till a train of artillery ſhould be brought from Sweden by ſea.

While he tarried here, he fixed his quarters at the diſtance of a few miles from the city, in reconnoitring which he frequently approached too near the ramparts. In theſe dangerous excurſions, the plain dreſs which he wore was of greater ſervice to him than he imagined, as it prevented his being diſtinguiſhed and marked out by the

the enemy, who would not have failed to fire upon him. One day, having advanced too near the fortifications, attended by one of his generals called Lieven, who was dreſſed in a blue-coat* trimmed with gold, and fearing leſt the general ſhould be too eaſily diſtinguiſhed, he ordered him to walk behind him. To this he was prompted by that greatneſs of ſoul which was ſo natural to him, that it even prevented his reflecting on the imminent danger to which he expoſed his own life, in order to preſerve that of his ſubject. Lieven perceiving his error too late, in having put on a remarkable dreſs, which endangered all thoſe who were near him, and being equally concerned for the king wher-ever he was, heſitated for a moment whether or not he ſhould obey him. In the midſt of this conteſt, the king takes him by the arm, puts himſelf before him, and ſcreens him with his body. At that inſtant, a cannon-ball taking them in flank, ſtruck the general dead upon the very ſpot which the king had hardly quitted. The death of this man killed exactly in his ſtead, and becauſe he had endeavoured to ſave him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the opinion, which he always entertained, of abſolute predeſtination; and made him believe that his fate, which had preſerved him in ſuch a ſingular manner, reſerved him for the execution of greater undertakings.

Every thing ſucceeded with him: his negociations and his arms were equally fortunate. He was preſent, as it were, in every part of Poland. His grand general Renſchild was in the heart of the kingdom with a large body of troops. About thirty thouſand Swedes, under different generals, were poſted towards the north and eaſt upon the frontiers of Muſcovy, and withſtood the united efforts of the whole Ruſſian empire; and Charles was in the weſt, at the other end of Poland, with the flower of his army.

The

* In the former editions we gave this officer a ſcarlet coat; but the chaplain Norberg hath ſo inconteſtably proved it to have been a blue one, that we have thought proper to correct the error.

The king of Denmark, tied up by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakneſs had hindered him from breaking, remained quiet. That prudent monarch did not venture to diſcover the diſguſt he felt at ſeeing the king of Sweden ſo near his dominions. At a greater diſtance towards the ſouth-weſt, between the rivers Elbe and Weſer, lay the duchy of Bremen, the moſt remote of all the ancient conqueſts of the Swedes. This country was filled with ſtrong garriſons, and opened to the conqueror a free paſſage into Saxony and the empire. Thus, from the German Ocean almoſt to the mouth of the Boriſthenes, comprehending the whole breadth of Europe, and even to the gates of Moſcow, all was in conſternation; and every one was daily expecting a general revolution. Charles's ſhips, which were now maſters of the Baltick, were employed in tranſporting to Sweden the priſoners he had taken in Poland. Sweden, undiſturbed in the midſt of theſe mighty commotions, enjoyed the ſweets of peace, and ſhared in the glory of its king, without bearing the burden of the war; inaſmuch as its victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expence of the conquered.

While all the northern powers were thus kept in awe by the arms of Charles XII. the town of Dantzick ventured to incur his diſpleaſure. Fourteen frigates and forty tranſports were bringing the king a reinforcement of ſix thouſand men, with cannon and ammunition, to form the ſiege of Thorn. Theſe ſuccours muſt neceſſarily paſs up the Weiſſel. At the mouth of this river ſtands Dantzick, a free and wealthy town, which, together with Thorn and Elbing, enjoys the ſame privileges in Poland as the imperial towns poſſeſs in Germany. Its liberty hath been alternately attacked by the Danes, the Swedes, and ſome German princes; and nothing hath preſerved it from bondage but the mutual jealouſy of theſe rival powers. Count Steinbock, one of the Swediſh generals, aſſembled the magiſtrates in the king's name, and demanded a paſſage for the troops and ammunition. The magiſtrates were guilty of a piece of imprudence very common with thoſe who treat with people more powerful than themſelves; they durſt neither

ther refuſe nor grant his demands. General Steinbock obliged them to grant more than he had at firſt demanded. He exacted from the city a contribution of an hundred thouſand crowns, as a puniſhment for their imprudent refuſal. At laſt the recruits, the cannon, and ammunition, being arrived before Thorn, the ſiege was begun on the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of the place, defended it for a month with a garriſon of five thouſand men. At the expiration of that term he was obliged to ſurrender at diſcretion The garriſon were made priſoners of war, and tranſported to Sweden. Robel was preſented to the king unarmed. That prince, who never loſt an opportunity of honouring merit in his enemies, gave him a ſword with his own hand, made him a handſome preſent in money, and diſmiſſed him on his parole. But the poor and paultry town was condemned to pay forty thouſand crowns; an exceſſive contribution for ſuch a place.

Elbing, built on an arm of the Weiſſel, founded by the Teutonic knights, and annexed likewiſe to Poland, did not profit by the miſconduct of the Dantzickers, but heſitated too long about granting a paſſage to the Swediſh troops. It was more ſeverely puniſhed than Dantzick. On the 13th of December Charles entered it at the head of four thouſand men, with bayonets fixed to the ends of their muſkets. The inhabitants, ſtruck with terror, fell upon their knees in the ſtreets, and begged for mercy. He cauſed them all to be diſarmed; quartered his ſoldiers upon them; and then, having aſſembled the magiſtrates, exacted that ſame day a contribution of two hundred and ſixty thouſand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon and four hundred thouſand weight of powder, which he likewiſe ſeized. A battle gained would not have procured him ſo many advantages. All theſe ſucceſſes paved the way for the dethroning of Auguſtus.

Hardly had the cardinal taken an oath that he would make no attempts againſt his ſovereign, when he repaired to the aſſembly of Warſaw, always under the ſpecious pretence of peace. When he arrived there he talked

talked of nothing but obedience and concord, though he was accompanied by a number of ſoldiers, whom he had raiſed on his own eſtate. At laſt he threw off the maſk; and, on the 14th of February 1704, declared, in the name of the aſſembly, "That Auguſtus, elector of Saxony, was incapable of wearing the crown of Poland." All the members with one voice pronounced the throne to be vacant. It was the intention of the king of Sweden, and conſequently of the diet, to raiſe prince James Sobieſki to the throne of king John his father. James Sobieſki was then at Breſlaw in Sileſia, waiting with impatience for the crown which his father had worn. While he was one day a-hunting a few leagues from Breſlaw, in company with prince Conſtantine, one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horſemen, ſent privately by king Auguſtus, iſſued ſuddenly from a neighbouring wood, ſurrounded the two princes, and carried them off without reſiſtance. They had prepared freſh horſes, upon which they conducted them to Leipſick, and committed them to cloſe cuſtody. This ſtroke diſconcerted the meaſures of Charles, the cardinal, and the aſſembly of Warſaw.

Fortune, which ſports herſelf with crowned heads, expoſed Auguſtus, almoſt at the ſame time, to the danger of being taken himſelf. He was at table three leagues from Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard which was poſted at ſome diſtance, when, all of a ſudden, general Renſchild appeared, after having carried off the guard. The king of Poland had but juſt time to get on horſeback, with ten others. General Renſchild purſued him for four days, juſt upon the point of ſeizing him every moment. The king fled to Sendomir: the Swediſh general purſued him thither; and it was only by a piece of good fortune that he made his eſcape.

Mean while the king's party and that of the cardinal treated each other as traitors in their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Auguſtus, being at laſt obliged to accept of aſſiſtance from the Ruſſians, was ſorry that he had not applied to them ſooner. One while he flew into Saxo-

ny, where his resources were exhausted; at another he returned to Poland, where no one durst serve him; while in the mean time the king of Sweden, victorious and unmolested, ruled in Poland with uncontrouled authority.

Count Piper, who was as great a politician as his master was a hero, advised Charles XII. to take the crown of Poland to himself. He represented how easy it would be to accomplish such a scheme with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of the kingdom, which was already subdued. He tempted him with the title of "Defender of the Evangelic Religion;" a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It would be easy, he said to effect in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had effected in Sweden; to establish the Lutheran religion, and to break the chains of the people, who were now held in slavery by the nobility and clergy. Charles yielded to the temptation for a moment; but glory was his idol. To it he sacrificed his own interest, and the pleasure he would have enjoyed in taking Poland from the pope. He told count Piper, that he was much happier in bestowing than in gaining kingdoms; and added with a smile, "You were made to be the minister of an Italian prince."

Charles was still near Thorn, in that part of Royal Prussia which belongs to Poland. From thence he extended his views to what was passing at Warsaw, and kept all the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother of the two Sobieskis who were carried into Silesia, came to implore his aid in revenging his wrongs. Charles granted his desire the more readily, as he thought he could easily gratify it, and that, at the same time, he should be avenging himself. But being extremely desirous of giving Poland a king, he advised prince Alexander to mount the throne, from which fortune seemed determined to exclude his brother. Little did he expect a refusal. Prince Alexander told him that nothing should ever induce him to make an advantage of his elder brother's misfortune. The king of Sweden, count Piper, all his friends, and especially the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leczinsky, press-

ed

ed him to accept of the crown; but he remained unmoved by all their importunities. The neighbouring princes were aſtoniſhed to hear of this uncommon refuſal; and knew not which to admire moſt: a king of Sweden, who, at twenty-two years of age, gave away the crown of Poland, or prince Alexander, who refuſed to accept it.

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK III.

THE CONTENTS.

STANISLAUS LECZINSKY elected King of POLAND. Death of the Cardinal-primate. Skilful Retreat of General SCHULLEMBURG. Exploits of the Czar. Foundation of PETERSBURG. Battle of FRAVENSTAD. CHARLES enters SAXONY. Peace of ALRANSTADT. AUGUSTUS abdicates the Crown in Favour of STANISLAUS. General PATKUL, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, is broke upon the Wheel and quartered. CHARLES receives the Ambassadors of foreign Princes in SAXONY: And goes to DRESDEN to visit AUGUSTUS before his Departure.

YOUNG Staniſlaus Leczinſky was then deputed by the aſſembly of Warſaw to go to the king of Sweden and give him an account of ſeveral differences which had ariſen among them, ſince the time that prince

prince James was carried off. Staniſlaus had a very engaging aſpect, full of courage and ſweetneſs, with an air of probity and frankneſs, which, of all external advantages, is certainly the greateſt, and gives more weight to words than even eloquence itſelf. Charles was ſurpriſed to hear him talk with ſo much judgment of Auguſtus, the aſſembly, the cardinal-primate, and the different intereſts that divided Europe. King Staniſlaus did me the honour to inform me, that he ſaid to the king of Sweden in Latin, "How can we elect a king, if the two princes, James and Conſtantine Sobieſki, are held in captivity?" and that Charles replied, "How can we deliver the republic if we dont elect a king?" This converſation was the only intrigue that placed Staniſlaus on the throne. Charles prolonged the converſation, on purpoſe that he might the better ſound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience, he ſaid aloud, that he had not ſeen a man ſo fit to reconcile all parties. He immediately made inquiry into the character of the palatine Leczinſky, and found that he was a man of great courage and inured to labour; that he always lay on a kind of ſtraw mattreſs, requiring no ſervice from his domeſtics; that he was temperate to a degree rarely known in that climate; liberal with œconomy; adored by his vaſſals; and perhaps the only lord in Poland who had any friends, at a time when men acknowledged no ties but thoſe of intereſt and faction. This character, which in many particulars reſembled his own, determined him entirely. After the conference he ſaid aloud, "There is the man that ſhall always be my friend." The meaning of which words was ſoon perceived to be, "There is the man that ſhall be king."

As ſoon as the primate of Poland underſtood that Charles XII. had nominated the palatine Leczinſky, in much the ſame manner as Alexander nominated Abdalonimus, he haſtened to the king of Sweden, to try if poſſible to divert him from his reſolution; being deſirous that the crown ſhould devolve on one Lubomirſky. "But what have you to object againſt Staniſlaus Leczinſky?" ſaid the conqueror. "Sir, (ſaid the primate) he is too young." "He is much about my age," replied

plied the king dryly; and turning his back upon the prelate, immediately diſpatched the count de Hoorn, to acquaint the aſſembly of Warſaw, that they muſt chooſe a king in five days, and that Staniſlaus Leczinſky muſt be the man. The count de Hoorn arrived on the 7th of July, and fixed the 12th for the day of election, with as much eaſe and indifference as if he had been ordering the decampment of a battalion. The cardinal-primate, diſappointed of the fruit of ſo many intrigues, returned to the aſſembly, where he left no ſtone unturned to defeat an election in which he had no ſhare. But the king of Sweden having come incognito to Warſaw, he was obliged to hold his peace. All that the primate could do was to abſent himſelf from the election: unable to oppoſe the conqueror, and unwilling to aſſiſt him, he confined himſelf to an uſeleſs neutrality.

Saturday the 12th of July, the day fixed for the election, being come, the aſſembly met at three in the afternoon at Colo, the place appointed for the ceremony; the biſhop of Poſnania acting as preſident, in the room of the cardinal-primate. He came attended by ſeveral gentlemen of the party. The count de Hoorn and two other general officers aſſiſted publicly at the ſolemnity, as ambaſſadors-extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The ſeſſion laſted till nine in the evening; and the biſhop of Poſnania put an end to it by declaring, in the name of the aſſembly, that Staniſlaus was elected king of Poland. They all threw up their hats into the air, and the ſhouts of acclamation ſtifled the cries of the oppoſers. It was of no ſervice to the cardinal-primate, or to the others who had reſolved to continue neuter, that they had abſented themſelves from the election; they were all obliged next day to come and do homage to the new king: but the greateſt mortification to which they were ſubjected was their being compelled to follow him to the king of Sweden's quarters. Charles paid the ſovereign he had made all the honours due to a king of Poland; and, to add the greater weight to his new dignity, he furniſhed him with a conſiderable ſum of money, and a ſufficient number of troops.

Immediately

Immediately after this, Charles XII. departed from Warſaw, in order to finiſh the conqueſt of Poland. He had ordered his army to rendezvous before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Ruſſia, a place important in itſelf, and ſtill more ſo on account of the riches which it contained. It was ſuppoſed it would hold out for fifteen days, by means of the fortifications with which Auguſtus had ſtrengthened it. The conqueror ſat down before it on the 5th of September, and next day took it by aſſault. All thoſe who preſumed to make reſiſtance were put to the ſword. The victorious troops, though maſters of the city, did not break their ranks to go a pillaging, notwithſtanding the immenſe treaſures that were ſaid to be concealed in Leopold. They drew up in order of battle in the great ſquare; where the remaining part of the garriſon came and ſurrendered themſelves priſoners of war. The king publiſhed his orders by ſound of trumpet, commanding, under pain of death, all the inhabitants, who had any effects belonging to Auguſtus or his adherents, to produce them before night. The meaſures he took were ſo wiſely concerted, that few ventured to diſobey; and accordingly four hundred cheſts of gold and ſilver coin, of plate and other valuable effects, were brought to his majeſty.

The beginning of Staniſlaus's reign was diſtinguiſhed by an event of a very different nature. Some buſineſs, which abſolutely required his preſence, had obliged him to remain at Warſaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters. The cardinal-primate, the biſhop of Poſnania, and ſome grandees of Poland, compoſed his new court. It was guarded by ſix thouſand Poles, of the army of the crown, who had lately entered into his ſervice, but whoſe fidelity had not yet been put to the trial. General Hoorn, governor of the town, had not above fifteen hundred Swedes. The citizens of Warſaw were in a profound tranquillity; and Staniſlaus propoſed ſetting out in a few days for the conqueſt of Leopold; when, all on a ſudden, he was informed that a numerous army was approaching the city. This was king Auguſtus, who, by a freſh ef-

fort, and by one of the moſt dexterous marches that ever general made, had eluded the king of Sweden, and was now coming with twenty thouſand men to fall upon Warſaw, and carry off his rival.

Warſaw was unfortified; the Poliſh troops, who defended it, were not to be relied on; Auguſtus held a correſpondence with ſome of the citizens; ſo that, had Staniſlaus remained in it, he muſt certainly have been ruined. He ſent back his family into Poſnania, under a guard of Poliſh troops in whom he could moſt confide. In this confuſion, he thought he had loſt his ſecond daughter, who was about a year old, and who had been carried by her nurſe into a neighbouring village, where ſhe was ſoon after found in a manger; as Staniſlaus himſelf hath ſince informed me. This is the ſame child whom fortune, after a variety of the moſt ſurpriſing viciſſitudes, at laſt made queen of France. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king immediately ſet out for the camp of Charles XII. learning thus betimes to ſuffer diſgrace, and forced to quit his capital ſix weeks after he had been advanced to the ſovereignty.

Auguſtus entered the capital like a provoked and victorious ſovereign. The inhabitants, already fleeced by the king of Sweden, were entirely ruined by Auguſtus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houſes of the confederate lords, with all their effects both in town and country, were given to plunder. What was moſt extraordinary in this ſudden revolution, the pope's nuncio, who attended Auguſtus demanded, in name of his maſter, that the biſhop of Poſnania ſhould be delivered into his hands, as ſubject to the juriſdiction of the court of Rome, both as a biſhop and as the favourer of a prince, who had been advanced to the throne by the arms of a Lutheran.

The court of Rome, which hath always been endeavouring to encreaſe its temporal power by means of the ſpiritual, had, long before this, eſtabliſhed a kind of juriſdiction in Poland, at the head of which was the pope's nuncio. Its miniſters never failed to avail themſelves of every favourable opportunity to extend their power,

power, which is revered by the multitude, but always conteſted by men of ſenſe. They claimed a right of judging in all eccleſiaſtical cauſes; and in times of trouble had uſurped ſeveral other privileges, in which they maintained themſelves till about the year 1728, when theſe abuſes were corrected; abuſes which are never reformed till they are become abſolutely intolerable.

Auguſtus, glad of an opportunity of puniſhing the biſhop of Poſnania in a decent manner, and willing to gratify the court of Rome, whoſe pretenſions, however, he would have oppoſed on any other occaſion, delivered the Poliſh prelate into the hands of the nuncio. The biſhop, after having ſeen his houſe pillaged, was carried by the ſoldiers to the lodgings of the Italian miniſter, and from thence ſent into Saxony, where he ended his days. Count Hoorn bore the continual fire of the enemy in the caſtle, where he was ſhut up, till at laſt, the place being no longer tenable, he ſurrendered himſelf with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the firſt advantage which Auguſtus gained, amidſt the torrent of his bad fortune, over the victorious arms of his enemy.

This laſt effort was the blaze of a fire that was juſt going out. His troops, which had been aſſembled in haſte, conſiſted either of Poles, ready to forſake him on the firſt diſgrace, or of Saxon recruits, who had never ſeen a campaign; or of vagabond Coſſacks, more fit to diſtreſs the conquered than to conquer: and all of them trembled at the bare mention of the king of Sweden's name.

That conqueror, accompanied by Staniſlaus, went in queſt of his enemy, at the head of his beſt troops. The Saxon army fled every where before him. The towns for thirty miles round ſent him the keys of their gates. Not a day paſſed that was not diſtinguiſhed by ſome advantage. Succeſs began to grow too familiar to Charles. He ſaid it was rather like hunting than fighting, and complained that he was not obliged to purchaſe a victory on harder terms.

Auguſtus gave the command of his army, for ſome time, to count Schullemburg, a very able general, and who had need of all his experience at the head of diſpirited troops. He was more anxious to preſerve his maſter's troops than to conquer. He acted by ſtratagem, and the two kings with vigour. He ſtole ſome marches upon them, took poſſeſſion of ſome advantageous poſts, ſacrificed a few horſe in order to give his infantry time to retire; and thus, by a glorious retreat, ſaved his troops in the face of an enemy, in contending with whom it was impoſſible, at that time, to acquire any other kind of glory.

He was ſcarce arrived in the palatinate of Poſnania, when he learned that the two kings, who, he imagined, were at the diſtance of fifty leagues, had marched theſe fifty leagues in nine hours. He had only eight thouſand foot, and a thouſand horſe; and yet, with his handful of men, he was obliged to make head againſt a ſuperior army, againſt the name of the king of Sweden, and againſt that terror with which ſo many defeats had naturally inſpired the Saxons. He had always affirmed, contrary to the opinion of the German generals, that infantry were able to reſiſt cavalry in open field, even without the aſſiſtance of chevaux de frize, and he this day ventured to put the matter to the teſt of experience, againſt the victorious cavalry commanded by two kings, and by the beſt Swediſh generals. He took poſſeſſion of ſuch an advantageous poſt, that he could not poſſibly be ſurrounded. The ſoldiers of the firſt rank, armed with pikes and fuſees bent one knee upon the ground, and ſtanding very cloſe together, preſented to the enemy's horſe a kind of pointed rampart with pikes and bayonets: the ſecond rank, inclining a little on the ſhoulders of the firſt, fired over their heads; and the third, ſtanding upright, fired at the ſame time, from behind the other two. The Swedes, with their uſual impetuoſity, ruſhed upon the Saxons, who waited the aſſault without flinching: the diſcharge of the muſkets, and the points of the pikes and bayonets maddened the horſes, and made them rear inſtead of advancing. By theſe means the attack of the Swedes was rendered

rendered diſorderly; and the Saxons defended themſelves by keeping their ranks.

Though he had received five wounds, he drew up his men in an oblong ſquare, and in this form made an orderly retreat about midnight towards the ſmall town of Gurau, three leagues diſtant from the field of battle. But he had hardly begun to breathe in this place, when the two kings ſuddenly appeared at his heels.

Beyond Gurau, towards the river Oder, lay a thick wood, by marching through which the Saxon general ſaved his fatigued infantry. The Swedes, who were not to be checked by ſuch a trivial interruption, purſued them even through the wood, advancing with great difficulty through paths hardly paſſable by foot travellers; and the Saxons had not croſſed the wood above five hours before the Swediſh horſe. On the other ſide of the wood runs the river Parts, hard by a village called Rutſen. Schullemburg had taken care to ſend orders for having the boats in readineſs; and he now tranſported his troops, which were diminiſhed by one half. Charles arrived the very moment that Schullemburg reached the oppoſite bank. Never conqueror purſued his enemy with greater celerity. The reputation of Schullemburg depended upon his eſcaping from the king of Sweden: the king, on the other hand, thought his glory concerned in taking Schullemburg, and the remains of his army. He loſt not a moment, but immediately cauſed his cavalry to croſs at a ford. And thus the Saxons found themſelves ſhut up between the river of Parts, and the greater river of Oder, which takes its riſe in Sileſia, and at this place is very deep and rapid.

Though the deſtruction of Schullemburg ſeemed to be inevitable, yet with the loſs of a few ſoldiers he paſſed the Oder in the night. Thus he ſaved his army, and Charles could not help ſaying, "Schullemburg has "conquered us to-day."

This is the ſame Schullemburg, who was afterwards general of the Venetians, and to whom the republic erected a ſtatue in Corfu, for having defended that bulwark of Italy againſt the Turks. Such honours are conferred

conferred by republics only: kings give nothing but rewards.

But what contributed ſo much to the glory of Schullemburg was of no ſervice to king Auguſtus, who once more abandoned Poland to his enemies; retired into Saxony, and inſtantly repaired the fortifications of Dreſden, being already afraid, and not without reaſon, for the capital of his hereditary dominions.

Charles XII. now beheld Poland reduced to ſubjection. His generals, after his example, had beat in Courland ſeveral ſmall bodies of the Muſcovites, who ever ſince the battle of Narva had appeared only in ſmall companies, and made war in thoſe parts like the vagrant Tartars, who pillage, fly, and then re-appear in order to fly again.

Wherever the Swedes came, they thought themſelves ſure of victory, when they were only twenty to an hundred. At this happy conjuncture, Staniſlaus prepared for his coronation. Fortune, to which he owed his election at Warſaw, and his expulſion from thence, now recalled him thither, amidſt the acclamations of a numerous nobility, attached to him by the fate of war. A diet was immediately convoked, where all obſtacles were removed, except ſuch as were raiſed by the court of Rome, which alone endeavoured to traverſe the project.

It was natural for Rome to declare in favour of Auguſtus, who from a proteſtant had become a catholic, in order to mount the throne of Poland, and to oppoſe Staniſlaus, who had been placed upon the ſame throne by the great enemy of the catholic religion. Clement XI. the then pope, ſent briefs to all the prelates of Poland, and particularly to the cardinal-primate, threatening them with excommunication, if they preſumed to aſſiſt at the conſecration of Staniſlaus, or attempt any thing againſt the rights of Auguſtus.

Should theſe briefs be delivered to the biſhops, who were at Warſaw, it was believed that ſome of them would be weak enough to obey them; and that the majority would avail themſelves of this pretext to become more troubleſome in proportion as they were more neceſſary.

neceſſary. Every poſſible precaution was therefore taken to prevent theſe letters of the pope from being admitted into Warſaw. But a Franciſcan received briefs ſecretly, promiſing to deliver them into the biſhop's own hands. He preſently gave one to the ſuffragan of Chelm. This prelate, who was ſtrongly attached to Staniſlaus, carried it to the king unopened. The king ſent for the monk, and aſked him how he durſt undertake to deliver a writing of that nature. The Franciſcan anſwered, that he did it by order of his general. Staniſlaus deſired him for the future to pay a greater regard to the orders of his king than to thoſe of the general of the Franciſcans, and forthwith baniſhed him the city.

The ſame day a placart was publiſhed by the king of Sweden, forbidding, under the moſt ſevere penalties, all the eccleſiaſtics in Warſaw, both ſecular and regular, to interfere in affairs of ſtate. And, for the greater ſecurity, he cauſed guards to be placed at the gates of all the prelates, and forbad any ſtranger to enter the city. Theſe little ſeverities he took upon himſelf, in order to prevent any rupture between the clergy and Staniſlaus, at his acceſſion to the throne. He ſaid he relaxed himſelf from the fatigues of war, in giving a check to the intrigues of the Romiſh court; and that he muſt fight againſt it with paper, whereas he was obliged to attack other ſovereigns with reals arms.

The cardinal-primate was ſolicited by Charles and Staniſlaus to come and perform the ceremony of the coronation. He did not think himſelf obliged to leave Dantzick, and to conſecrate a king who had been choſen againſt his will. But, as it was his maxim never to do any thing without a pretext, he reſolved to provide a lawful excuſe for his refuſal. He cauſed the pope's brief to be fixed in the night time to the gate of his own houſe. The magiſtrates of Dantzick took fire at this indignity, and cauſed ſtrict ſearch to be made for the authors, who nevertheleſs could not be found. The primate affected to be highly incenſed, but in reality was very well pleaſed, as it furniſhed him with a reaſon for refuſing to conſecrate the new king; and

thus

thus at one and the ſame time he kept fair with Charles XII. Auguſtus, Staniſlaus, and the pope. He died a few days after, leaving his country involved in confuſion, and having reaped no other fruit from all his intrigues, but that of embroiling himſelf with the three kings, Charles, Auguſtus, and Staniſlaus; and with the republic and the pope, who had ordered him to repair to Rome, to give an account of his conduct. But, as even politicians are ſometimes touched with remorſe in their laſt moments, he wrote to king Auguſtus on his death-bed, and begged his pardon.

The conſecration was performed with equal tranquillity and magnificence, on the fourth of October 1705, in the city of Warſaw, notwithſtanding the uſual cuſtom of the Poles, of crowning the kings at Cracow. Staniſlaus Leczinſky and his wife Charlotta Opalinſka, were conſecrated king and queen of Poland, by the hands of the archbiſhop of Leopold, aſſiſted by ſeveral other prelates. Charles XII. ſaw the ceremony incognito, the only advantage he reaped from his conqueſts.

While he thus was giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark durſt not preſume to create him any diſturbances; while the king of Pruſſia courted his friendſhip, and Auguſtus was retired to his hereditary dominions, the czar was every day becoming more and more formidable. Though he had given but little aſſiſtance to Auguſtus in Poland, he had nevertheleſs made powerful diverſions in Ingria.

He now began to grow not only a good ſoldier himſelf but likewiſe inſtructed his ſubjects in the art of war. Diſcipline was eſtabliſhed among his troops. He had good engineers, and well ſerved artillery, and ſeveral good officers; and he underſtood the great ſecret of ſubſiſting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and, as occaſion required, to decline fighting; and he had beſides formed a reſpectable navy, capable of making head againſt the Swedes in the Baltick.

Strengthened by all theſe advantages, which were entirely owing to his own genius, and by the abſence

of

of the king of Sweden, he took Narva by aſſault, on the twenty-firſt of Auguſt 1704, after a regular ſiege, during which he had prevented its receiving any ſuccours either by ſea or land. The ſoldiers were no ſooner maſters of the city than they ran to pillage, and abandoned themſelves to the moſt enormous barbarities. The czar flew from place to place, to ſtop the diſorder and carnage. He ſnatched the women from the hands of the ſoldiers, who, after having raviſhed them, were going to cut their throats. He was even obliged to kill ſome Muſcovites who did not obey his orders. They ſtill ſhew you, in the town houſe of Narva, the table upon which he laid his ſword as he entered, and repeat the words which he ſpoke to the citizens, who were there aſſembled. "It is not with the blood of the inhabitants that this ſword is ſtained, but with that of the Muſcovites, which I have ſhed to ſave your lives."

Had the czar always obſerved theſe humane maxims, he would have been the greateſt man in the world. He aſpired to a nobler character than that of a deſtroyer of towns. He was, at that time, laying the foundation of a city not far from Narva, in the middle of his new conqueſts. This was the city of Peterſburg, which he afterwards made the place of his reſidence, and the centre of his trade. It is ſituated between Finland and Ingria, in a marſhy iſland, around which the Neva divides itſelf into ſeveral branches, before it falls into the gulph of Finland. With his own hands he drew the plan of the city, the fortreſs, and the harbour, the keys which embelliſhed it, and the forts which defended its entrance. This deſert and uncultivated iſland, which, during the ſhort ſummer in thoſe climates, was only a heap of mud, and in winter a frozen pool, into which there was no entry by land but through pathleſs foreſts and deep moraſſes, and which had hitherto been the haunt of wolves and bears, was filled in 1703, with above three hundred thouſand men, whom the czar had brought thither from his other dominions. The peaſants of the kingdom of Aſtracan, and thoſe who inhabit the frontiers of China, were tranſported to Peterſburg.

terſburg. He was obliged to clear foreſts, to make roads, to drain marſhes, and to raiſe banks, before he could lay the foundation of the city. The whole was a force put upon nature. The czar was determined to people a country, which did not ſeem deſigned for the habitation of men. Neither the inundation which razed his works, nor the ſterility of the ſoil, nor the ignorance of the workmen, nor even the mortality which carried off about two hundred thouſand men in the beginning of the undertaking, could divert him from his firm reſolution. The town was founded amidſt the obſtacles which nature, the genius of the people, and an unſucceſsful war, conſpired to raiſe againſt it. Peterſburg was become a city in 1705, and its harbour was filled with ſhips. The emperor, by a proper diſtribution of favours, drew many ſtrangers thither, beſtowing lands upon ſome, houſes upon others, and encouraging all the artiſts that came to civilize this barbarous climate. Above all, he had rendered it proof againſt the utmoſt effort of his enemies. The Swediſh generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were never able to hurt his infant colony. It enjoyed a profound tranquillity in the midſt of the war, with which it was ſurrounded.

While the czar was thus creating, as it were, new dominions to himſelf, he ſtill held out a helping hand to Auguſtus, who was loſing his. He perſuaded him, by means of general Patkul, who had lately entered into the ſervice of Muſcovy, and was then the czar's ambaſſador in Saxony, to come to Grodno to confer with him once more on the unhappy ſituation of his affairs. Thither Auguſtus repaired with ſome troops, and accompanied by general Schullemburg, who was now become famous over all the north for his paſſage croſs the Oder, and in whom the king repoſed his laſt hopes. The czar arrived at the ſame place, followed by an army of ſeventy thouſand men. The two monarchs concerted new meaſures for carrying on the war. Auguſtus, being now dethroned, was no longer afraid of provoking the Poles, by abandoning their country to the

the Muſcovite troops. It was reſolved that the army of the czar ſhould be divided into ſeveral bodies, to check the progreſs of the king of Sweden at every ſtep. It was at this time that Auguſtus renewed the order of the white eagle, a weak expedient for attaching to his intereſt ſome Poliſh lords, who were more deſirous of real advantages than of an empty honour, which becomes ridiculous when it is held of a prince poſſeſſed of nothing but the name of king. The conference of the two kings ended in a very extraordinary manner. The czar departed ſuddenly, left his troops to his ally, and went to extinguiſh a rebellion with which he was threatened in Aſtracan. Immediately after his departure, Auguſtus ordered Patkul to be arreſted at Dreſden. All Europe was ſurpriſed at his conduct, in preſuming, contrary to the law of nations, and even, in appearance, to his own intereſt, to impriſon the ambaſſador of the only prince from whom he could expect any aſſiſtance.

The ſecret ſpring of this tranſaction, as I had the honour to be informed from marſhal Saxe, ſon to king Auguſtus, was as follows: Patkul, proſcribed in Sweden for having defended the privileges of Livonia, his native country, had been general to Auguſtus; but, his high and lofty ſpirit being unable to brook the haughty behaviour of general Fleming, the king's favourite, more imperious and lofty than himſelf, he had paſſed into the ſervice of the czar, whoſe general he then was, and his Ambaſſador at the court of Auguſtus. Endowed, as he was, with a penetrating genius, he had obſerved that Fleming and the chancellor of Saxony intended to purchaſe a peace from the king of Sweden at any price. He forthwith formed a deſign to prevent them, and to effect an accommodation between the czar and Sweden. The chancellor diſcovered his project, and obtained leave to ſeize him. Auguſtus told the czar, that Patkul was a perfidious wretch, and would betray them both. And yet he was no further culpable than in having ſerved his new maſter too well; but an ill-timed piece of ſervice frequently meets with the puniſhment due to treaſon.

Mean

Mean while, the ſixty thouſand Ruſſians, divided into ſeveral ſmall bodies, were burning and ravaging the lands of Staniſlaus's adherents, on one ſide; and on the other, Schullemburg was advancing with freſh troops. The fortune of the Swedes diſperſed theſe two armies in leſs than two Months. Charles XII. and Staniſlaus attacked the ſeparate bodies of the Muſcovites, one after another, and with ſo much vigour and diſpatch, that one Muſcovite general was beat before he heard of the defeat of his companion.

Nothing could ſtop the progreſs of the conqueror. If a river intervened between him and the enemy, Charles XII. and his Swedes ſwam acroſs it. A party of Swedes took the baggage of Auguſtus, in which were found two hundred thouſand crowns of ſilver. Staniſlaus ſeized eight hundred thouſand ducats belonging to prince Menzikoff, the Ruſſian general. Charles, at the head of his cavalry, marched thirty leagues in four and twenty hours; every ſoldier leading a horſe in his hand to mount when his own was weary. The Muſcovites, ſtruck with terror, and reduced to a ſmall number, fled in diſorder beyond the Boriſthenes.

While Charles was driving the Muſcovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Schullemburg at laſt repaſſed the Oder, and came at the head of twenty thouſand men to give battle to the grand marſhal Renſchild, who was reckoned the beſt general that Charles had, and was called the Parmenio of this Alexander of the North. Theſe two illuſtrious generals, who ſeemed to ſhare the fate of their maſters, met near Punitz, in a place called Travenſtad, a ſpot already fatal to the troops of Auguſtus. Renſchild had only thirteen battalions, and two and twenty ſquadrons, amounting in all to about ten thouſand men. Schullemburg had double that number. It is worthy of remark, that there was in his army a body of ſix or ſeven thouſand Muſcovites, who had been long diſciplined, and were eſteemed good ſoldiers. The battle of Travenſtad was fought on the twelfth of February 1706. But this very general Schullemburg, who, with four and twenty thouſand men, had, in ſome meaſure, baffled the good

fortune

fortune of the king of Sweden, ſunk under that of general Renſchild. The combat did not laſt a quarter of an hour; the Saxons made no reſiſtance; the Muſcovites threw down their arms the moment they ſaw the Swedes. The panic was ſo ſudden, and the confuſion ſo great, that the conquerors found on the field of battle ſeven thouſand loaded ſuſees, which the enemy had thrown away without firing. No defeat was ever more ſudden, more complete, or more diſgraceful; and yet no general ever made a finer diſpoſition of his troops than Schullemburg, even by the confeſſion of the Saxon and Swediſh generals themſelves, who this day ſaw how little human prudence is able to command events.

Among the priſoners there was an entire regiment of Frenchmen. Theſe unhappy men had been taken by the Saxons in 1704, at the famous battle of Hochſtet, ſo fatal to the grandeur of Lewis XIV. They had afterwards paſſed into the ſervice of Auguſtus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, the command of which he had given to a Frenchman of the family of Joyeuſe. The colonel was killed at the firſt, or rather the only charge of the Swedes; and the whole regiment were made priſoners of war. That very day the French begged to be admitted into the ſervice of Charles XII. into which they were accordingly received by a ſtrange caprice of fortune, which reſerved them once more to change their maſter and their conqueror.

With regard to the Muſcovites, they begged their lives on their knees: but the Swedes cruelly put them to death above ſix hours after the battle, in order to revenge on them the outrages which their countrymen had committed, and to rid their hands of thoſe priſoners whom they did not know how to diſpoſe of.

Auguſtus now ſaw himſelf deprived of all reſources. He had nothing left at Cracow, where he was ſhut up with two regiments of Muſcovites, two of Saxons, and ſome troops of the army of the crown, by whom he was even afraid of being delivered up to the conqueror: but his misfortunes were completed when he heard that

Charles

Charles XII. had at laſt entered Saxony, on the firſt of September 1706.

He had marched through Sileſia, without ſo much as deigning to apprize the court of Vienna of his motions. Germany was ſtruck with conſternation. The diet of Ratiſbon, which repreſents the empire, and whoſe reſolutions are frequently as ineffectual as they are ſolemn, declared the king of Sweden an enemy of the empire, if he ſhould paſs the Oder with his army: a ſtep which only determined him to march the ſooner into Germany.

At his approach the villages were deſerted, and the inhabitants fled on all ſides. Charles behaved in the ſame manner as he had done at Copenhagen: he cauſed a declaration to be fixed up in all public places, importing, That his only intention in coming was to procure peace; that all thoſe who ſhould return home and pay the contributions he demanded, ſhould be treated as his own ſubjects, and the reſt puniſhed without mercy. This declaration from a prince, who was never known to break his word, made all thoſe who had fled for fear, to return home. He pitched his camp at Altranſtad, near the plain of Lutzen, a field famous for the victory and death of Guſtavus Adolphus. He went to ſee the place where that great man fell. When he reached the ſpot, "I have endeavoured (ſaid he) to live like him; God, perhaps, will one day grant me as glorious a death."

From this camp, he ſent orders to the ſtates of Saxony to aſſemble, and to tranſmit to him, without delay, the regiſters of the electoral finances. As ſoon as he had got them in his power, and was exactly informed how much Saxony could ſupply, he taxed it at ſix hundred twenty five thouſand rix-dollars a month. Over and above this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furniſh every Swediſh ſoldier with two pounds of fleſh, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and four pence a day, with forage for the horſe. The contributions being thus regulated, the king eſtabliſhed a new police, to protect the Saxons from the inſults of his ſoldiers. In all the towns where he placed garriſons,

garriſons, he ordered the inn-keepers, in whoſe houſes the ſoldiers were quartered, to deliver every month certificates of their behaviour, without which the ſoldiers were to have no pay. Beſides, inſpectors were appointed, who, once in every fifteen days, went from houſe to houſe to make inquiry whether the Swedes had committed any outrage; in which caſe, care was taken to indemnify the inn-keepers, and to puniſh the delinquents.

It is well known under what ſevere diſcipline the troops of Charles XII. were kept; that they never plundered the towns which they took by aſſault till they had received permiſſion; and that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off at the firſt ſignal. The Swedes pique themſelves to this day on the ſtrict diſcipline which they obſerved in Saxony; and yet the Saxons complain of the terrible ravages they committed; contradictions which it would be impoſſible to reconcile, did not we know in what very different lights the ſame objects appear to different men. It could hardly happen but that the conquerors muſt have ſometimes abuſed their rights; and the conqured have taken the ſlighteſt injuries for the moſt enormous outrages. One day, as the king was taking the air on horſeback, in the neighbourhood of Leipſick, a Saxon peaſant threw himſelf at his feet, begging he would do him juſtice on a grenadier, who had juſt taken from him what was deſigned for his family's dinner. The king ordered the ſoldier to be brought before him; "And is it true, (ſays he with a ſtern countenance) that you have robbed this man?" "Sir, (ſays the ſoldier) I have not done him ſo much harm as you have done to his maſter: you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow." The king gave the peaſant ten ducats with his own hand, and pardoned the ſoldier for the wit and boldneſs of the reply; adding, "Remember, friend, that, if I have taken a kingdom from Auguſtus, I have kept nothing to myſelf."

The great fair of Leipſick was held as uſual. The merchants came thither in perfect ſecurity. Not one Swediſh ſoldier was to be ſeen in the fair. One would have

have ſaid that the army of the king of Sweden was in Saxony for no other reaſon than to watch over the ſafety of the country. He commanded throughout all the electorate with a power as abſolute, and a tranquillity as profound, as if he had been in Stockholm.

Auguſtus wandering up and down Poland, and deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at laſt wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII. in which he humbly ſued for peace. This letter he ſent ſecretly by baron d'Imhoff and Mr. Fingſten referendary of the privy council, to which two gentlemen he gave full power, and a blank ſigned: "Go, (ſays he to "them) endeavour to procure me reaſonable and Chriſtian conditions." He was obliged, however, to conceal theſe overtures, and to decline the mediation of any prince; for, being then in Poland, at the mercy of the Muſcovites, he had reaſon to fear that that dangerous ally, whom he was now going to abandon, would puniſh him for his ſubmiſſion to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaries came to Charles's camp in the night-time, and had a private audience. The king, having read the letter, told them they ſhould have his anſwer in a moment; and accordingly, retiring to his cloſet, he wrote as follows:

"I conſent to give peace on the following conditions, in which it muſt not be expected that ever I will make the leaſt alteration.

I. That Auguſtus renounce the crown of Poland for ever; that he acknowledge Staniſlaus as lawful king; and that he promiſes never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Staniſlaus.

II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly thoſe he hath made with Muſcovy.

III. That he ſend back to my camp, in an honourable manner, the princes Sobieſki, and all the priſoners he hath taken.

IV. That he deliver into my hands all the deſerters that have entered into his ſervice, and particularly John Patkul; and that he ſtop all proceedings againſt ſuch as have paſſed from his ſervice into mine."

This

This paper he gave to count Piper, with orders to tranſact the reſt with the plenipotentiaries of Auguſtus. Theſe gentlemen were ſhocked at the cruelty of the propoſals; and uſed all the little arts that men without power can employ, to ſoften, if poſſible, the rigour of the king of Sweden. They had ſeveral conferences with count Piper; but that miniſter anſwered all their arguments with this ſhort reply; "Such is the will of the king my maſter, and he never alters his reſolution."

While theſe negociations were carrying on in Saxony, fortune ſeemed to put Auguſtus in a condition to obtain more honourable terms, and of treating with his conqueror on a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikoff, generaliſſimo of the Muſcovite army, brought into Poland a body of thirty thouſand men, at a time when Auguſtus not only did not deſire their aſſiſtance, but even feared it. He had with him ſome Poliſh and Saxon troops, making in all about ſix thouſand men. Surrounded with this ſmall body by the army of prince Menzikoff, he had every thing to fear, in caſe the negociation ſhould be diſcovered. He ſaw himſelf at once dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being arreſted by his ally. In this delicate conjuncture, one of the Swediſh generals, named Meyerfeld, at the head of ten thouſand men, appeared at Caliſh, near the palatinate of Poſnania. Prince Menzikoff preſſed Auguſtus to give them battle. The king, who was greatly embarraſſed, delayed the engagement under various pretexts; for, though the enemy had but one third of his number, there were four thouſand Swedes in Meyerfeld's army, and that alone was ſufficient to render the event doubtful. To give battle to the Swedes during the negociation, and to loſe it, was, in effect, to deepen the abyſs in which he was already plunged. He therefore reſolved to ſend a truſty ſervant to the general of the enemy, to give him ſome diſtant hints with regard to the peace, and adviſe him to retreat. But this advice produced an effect quite contrary to what he expected. General Meyerfeld thought they were laying a ſnare to intimidate him; and for that reaſon reſolved to hazard a battle.

The

The Ruſſians, now for the firſt time, conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which Auguſtus gained almoſt againſt his will, was entire and complete. In the midſt of his bad fortune, he entered triumphant into Warſaw, formerly his flouriſhing capital, but then a diſmantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the ſtrongeſt for king. He was tempted to ſeize upon this moment of proſperity, to go and attack the king of Sweden in Saxony with the Muſcovite army. But when he reflected, that Charles XII. was at the head of a Swediſh army, hitherto invincible; that the Ruſſians would abandon him on the firſt intelligence of the treaty he had begun; that his Saxon dominions, already drained of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Swedes and Muſcovites; that the empire, engaged in a war with France, could afford him no aſſiſtance; and that, in the end, he ſhould be left without dominions, money, or friends; he thought it moſt adviſeable to comply with the terms which the king of Sweden ſhould impoſe. Theſe terms became ſtill more hard when Charles heard that Auguſtus had attacked his troops during the negociation. His reſentment, and the pleaſure of further humbling an enemy who had juſt vanquiſhed his forces, made him inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of Auguſtus ſerved only to render his ſituation the more miſerable; a thing which perhaps never happened to any but himſelf.

He had juſt cauſed *Te Deum* to be ſung at Warſaw, when Fingſten, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony with the treaty of peace which deprived him of his crown. Auguſtus heſitated for a little, but at laſt ſigned it; and then ſet out for Saxony, vainly hoping that his preſence would ſoften the king of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps remember the ancient alliances of their families, and the common blood that ran in both their veins.

Theſe two princes met for the firſt time in count Piper's tent, at a place called Guterſdorff, without any ceremony. Charles XII. was in jack-boots, with a piece

piece of black taffety tied round his neck inſtead of a cravat: his cloaths, as uſual, were of coarſe blue cloth, with gilt braſs buttons. He had a long ſword by his ſide, which had ſerved him in the battle of Narva, and upon the pummel of which he frequently leaned. The converſation turned wholly upon theſe jack-boots; Charles XII. told Auguſtus that he had not laid them aſide for theſe ſix years paſt, except when he went to bed. Theſe trifles were the only ſubject of diſcourſe between two kings, one of whom had deprived the other of a crown. Auguſtus, eſpecially, ſpoke with an air of complaiſance and ſatisfaction, which princes, and men accuſtomed to the management of great affairs, know how to aſſume amidſt the moſt cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together two ſeveral times. Charles XII. always affected to give Auguſtus the right hand; but, far from mitigating the rigour of his demands, he rendered them ſtill more ſevere. It was certainly a very mortifying thing, for a ſovereign to be forced to deliver up a general officer and a public miniſter. It was ſtill a greater debaſement to be obliged to ſend the jewels and archives of the crown to his ſucceſſor Staniſlaus. But what completed his degradation was his being at laſt compelled to congratulate, on his acceſſion to the throne, the man who was going to uſurp his place. Charles required Auguſtus to write a letter to Staniſlaus. The dethroned king endeavoured to evade the demand; but Charles inſiſted upon his writing the letter, and he was at laſt obliged to comply. Here follows an exact copy of it, which I have ſeen. It is tranſcribed from the original, which is ſtill in the poſſeſſion of king Staniſlaus.

"SIR and BROTHER,

"We little imagined it would have been neceſſary to enter into a literary correſpondence with your majeſty; nevertheleſs, in order to pleaſe his Swediſh majeſty, and to avoid the ſuſpicion of our being unwilling to gratify his deſire, we hereby congratulate you on your acceſſion to the throne; and wiſh you may find in

your native country more faithful ſubjects than we have left there. All the world will do us the juſtice to believe, that we have received nothing but the moſt ungrateful returns for our good offices, and that the greater part of our ſubjects ſeemed to have no other aim than to haſten our ruin. Wiſhing that you may never be expoſed to the like misfortunes, we commit you to the protection of God.

Your brother and neighbour,

Dreſden, April 8, 1707. AUGUSTUS, King.

Auguſtus was obliged to give orders to all his magiſtrates no longer to ſtile him king of Poland, and to eraſe this title, which he now renounced, out of the public prayers. He was leſs averſe to the releaſing of the Sobieſkies; but the ſacrifice of Patkul was the ſevereſt of all. The czar, on the one hand, loudly demanded him back as his ambaſſador; and, on the other, the king of Sweden, with the moſt terrible menaces in caſe of a refuſal, inſiſted that he ſhould be delivered up to him. Patkul was then confined in the caſtle of Konigſtein, in Saxony. Auguſtus thought he might eaſily gratify Charles XII. and ſave his own honour. He ſent his guards to deliver this unhappy man to the Swediſh troops; but he previouſly diſpatched a ſecret order to the governor of Konigſtein, to let his priſoner eſcape. The bad fortune of Patkul defeated the pains that were taken to ſave him. The governor, knowing that Patkul was very rich, had a mind to make him purchaſe his liberty. The priſoner ſtill relying on the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of Auguſtus, refuſed to pay for that which he thought he had a title to obtain for nothing. During this interval, the guards who were commiſſioned to ſeize the priſoner arrived, and immediately delivered him to four Swediſh captains, who carried him forthwith to the general quarters at Altranſtad, where he remained for three months tied to a ſtake, with a heavy iron chain; and from thence was conducted to Caſimir.

Charles

Charles XII. forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambaſſador, and conſidering him only as his own ſubject, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmoſt rigour. He was condemned to be broke alive, and quartered. A chaplain having come to inform him of the fatal ſentence, without acquainting him with the manner in which it was to be executed, Patkul, who had braved death in ſo many battles, finding himſelf ſhut up with a prieſt, and his courage being no longer ſupported by glory or paſſion, the only ſources of human intrepidity, poured out a flood of tears into the chaplain's boſom. He was affianced to a Saxon lady, called Madam d'Einſiedel, a woman of birth, of merit, and of beauty, and whom he intended to have married much about the time that he was now condemned to die. He intreated the chaplain to wait upon her, to give her all the conſolation he could, and to aſſure her that he died full of the moſt tender affection for his incomparable miſtreſs. When he was brought to the place of puniſhment, and beheld the wheels and ſtakes prepared for his execution, he fell into convulſions, and threw himſelf into the arms of the miniſter, who embraced him, covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. Then a Swediſh officer read aloud a paper to the following effect:

"This is to declare, that it is the expreſs order of his majeſty, our moſt merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel, and quartered, in order to attone for his crimes, and to be an example to others; that every one may beware of treaſon, and faithfully ſerve his king." At the words "moſt merciful prince." Patkul cried out, "What mercy?" and at thoſe of "traitor to his country," "Alas! (ſaid he) I have ſerved it but too well." He received ſixteen blows, and ſuffered the longeſt and moſt excruciating tortures that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinold Patkul, ambaſſador and general of the emperor of Ruſſia.

Thoſe that looked upon him only as a rebel, ſaid that he deſerved death; but thoſe who conſidered him as a Livonian, born in a province that had privileges to de-

ſend, and remembered that he had been baniſhed from Livonia for no other reaſon than his having defended thoſe privileges, called him a martyr to the liberty of his country. But all agreed that the title of ambaſſador to the czar ought to have rendered his perſon ſacred. The king of Sweden alone, brought up in the principles of arbitrary power, thought that he had only performed an act of juſtice, whilſt all Europe condemned his cruelty.

His mangled limbs remained expoſed upon gibbets till 1713, when Auguſtus, having regained his throne, cauſed theſe teſtimonies of the neceſſity to which he was reduced at Altranſtad to be gathered together. They were brought to Warſaw in a box, and delivered to him in preſence of the French envoy. The king of Poland ſhewing the box to this miniſter, only ſaid, "Theſe are the limbs of Patkul;" without adding anything, either to blame his conduct or to bewail his memory, and without any one daring to ſpeak on ſo delicate and mournful a ſubject.

About this time, a Livonian called Paikel, an officer in the Saxon troops, who had been taken priſoner in the field, was condemned at Stockholm by a decree of the ſenate; but his ſentence was only to loſe his head. This difference of puniſhments in the ſame caſe, made it but too plain, that Charles, in putting Patkul to ſuch a cruel death, was more anxious to avenge himſelf than to puniſh the criminal. Be that as it will, Paikel, after his condemnation, propoſed to the ſenate to impart to the king the ſecret of making gold, on condition that he ſhould obtain his pardon. He made the experiment in priſon, in preſence of colonel Hamilton and the magiſtrates of the town; and whether he had actually diſcovered ſome uſeful ſecret, or, which is more probable, had only acquired the art of deceiving with a plauſible air, they carried the gold which was found in the crucible to the mint at Stockholm, and gave the ſenate ſuch a full, and ſeemingly ſuch an important account of the matter, that the queen-dowager, Charles's grandmother, ordered the execution to be ſuſpended till the king

king ſhould be informed of this uncommon affair, and ſhould ſend his orders accordingly.

The king made anſwer, "That he had refuſed the pardon of the criminal to the entreaties of his friends, and that he would never grant to intereſt what he had denied to friendſhip." This inflexibility had ſomething in it very heroical in a prince, eſpecially as he thought the ſecret practicable. Auguſtus, upon hearing this ſtory, ſaid, "I am not ſurpriſed at the king of Sweden's indifference about the philoſopher's ſtone: he has found it in Saxony."

When the czar was informed of the ſtrange peace which Auguſtus had, notwithſtanding their former treaties, concluded at Altranſtad; and that Patkul, his ambaſſador-plenipotentiary, was delivered up to the king of Sweden, in contempt of the law of nations, he loudly complained of theſe indignities to the courts of Europe. He wrote to the emperor of Germany, to the queen of England, and to the ſtates-general of the United Provinces. He gave the terms of cowardice and treachery to the ſad neceſſity to which Auguſtus had been obliged to ſubmit. He conjured all theſe powers to interpoſe their mediation to procure the reſtoration of his ambaſſador, and to prevent the affront, which, in his perſon, was going to be offered to all crowned heads. He preſſed them, by the motive of honour, not to demean themſelves ſo far as to become guarantees of the treaty of Altranſtad; a conceſſion which Charles XII. meant to extort from them by his threatening and imperious behaviour. Theſe letters had no other effect than to ſet the power of the king of Sweden in a ſtronger light. The emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a deſtructive war againſt France, and thought it a very unſeaſonable juncture to exaſperate Charles XII. by refuſing the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. With regard to the unhappy Patkul, there was not a ſingle power that interpoſed its good offices in his behalf; from whence it appears what little confidence a ſubject ought to put in princes, and how much all the European powers at that time ſtood in awe of the king of Sweden.

It was propoſed in the czar's council to retaliate on the Swediſh officers who were priſoners at Moſcow; but the czar would not conſent to a barbarity which would have been attended with fatal conſequences, as there were more Muſcovites priſoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Muſcovy.

He reſolved to take a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army lay idle in Saxony. Levenhaupt, the king of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thouſand men, was not able to guard the paſſes into a country without forts, and full of factions. Staniſlaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The emperor of Muſcovy ſeizes this opportunity, and re-enters Poland with above 60,000 men. Theſe he divides into ſeveral bodies, and marches with a flying camp to Leopold, where there was no Swediſh garriſon. All the towns of Poland yield to any one, who appears before their gates at the head of an army. He cauſed an aſſembly to be convoked at Leopold, of much the ſame nature with that which had dethroned Auguſtus at Warſaw.

At that time Poland had two primates, as well as two kings, the one nominated by Auguſtus, the other by Staniſlaus. The primate nominated by Auguſtus ſummoned the aſſembly of Leopold, to which reſorted all thoſe whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranſtad, and ſuch as were gained by the czar's money. Here it was propoſed to elect a new ſovereign; ſo that Poland was almoſt upon the point of having three kings at once, without being able to ſay which was the real one.

During the conferences at Leopold, the czar, whoſe intereſt was cloſely connected with that of the emperor of Germany, on account of the common dread which they both entertained of the power of the king of Sweden, ſecretly obtained from him a number of German officers; who daily arriving, encreaſed his ſtrength in a conſiderable degree, by bringing along with them diſcipline and experience. Theſe he engaged in his ſervice by ſeveral inſtances of liberality; and the more to encourage his own troops, he gave his picture ſet round with

with diamonds to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Caliſh: the ſubaltern officers had medals of gold, and every private ſoldier a medal of ſilver. Theſe monuments of the victory at Caliſh were all ſtruck in the new city of Peterſburg; where the improvement of the arts kept pace with the deſire of glory and ſpirit of emulation which the czar had infuſed into his troops.

The confuſion, the multiplicity of factions, and the continual ravages prevailing in Poland, hindered the diet of Leopold from coming to any reſolution. The czar transferred it to Lublin; but the change of place did not leſſen the diſorder and perplexity in which the whole nation was involved. The aſſembly contented themſelves with declaring that they neither acknowledged Auguſtus who had abdicated the throne, nor Staniſlaus who had been elected againſt their will; but they were neither ſufficiently united, nor had reſolution enough to nominate another king. During theſe fruitleſs deliberations, the party of the princeſs Sapieha, that of Oginſky, thoſe who ſecretly adhered to Auguſtus, and the new ſubjects of Staniſlaus, all made war upon one another, and, by pillaging each other's eſtates, completed the ruin of their country. The Swediſh troops, commanded by Levenhaupt, one part of which lay in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in purſuit of the Ruſſians, and ſet fire to every thing that oppoſed Staniſlaus. The Ruſſians ruined their friends and foes without diſtinction; and nothing was to be ſeen but towns reduced to aſhes, and wandering troops of poles, deprived of all their ſubſtance, and deteſting alike their two kings, the czar, and Charles XII.

To quell theſe commotions, and to ſecure the poſſeſſion of the throne, Staniſlaus ſet out from Altranſtad on the fifteenth of July, 1707, accompanied by general Renſchild, and ſixteen Swediſh regiments, and furniſhed with a large ſum of money. He was acknowledged wherever he came. The ſtrict diſcipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Muſcovites to be more ſenſibly felt, conciliated the affections of the people.

His extreme affability, in proportion as it was better known, reconciled to him almoſt all the different factions; and his money procured him the greateſt part of the army of the crown. The czar, apprehenſive of wanting proviſions, in a country which his troops had laid waſte, retired into Lithuania, where he had fixed the general rendezvous of his army, and where he reſolved to eſtabliſh magazines. This retreat left Staniſlaus the undiſturbed ſovereign of the greateſt part of Poland.

The only perſon, that gave him any uneaſineſs, was count Sincauſky, grand general of the crown, by the nomination of Auguſtus. This man, who was poſſeſſed of no contemptible talents, and entertained the moſt ambitious views, was at the head of a third party. He neither acknowledged Auguſtus nor Staniſlaus; and after having uſed his utmoſt efforts in order to procure his own election, he contented himſelf with being the head of a party, ſince he could not be king. The troops of the crown, which continued under his command, had no other pay but the liberty of pillaging their fellow ſubjects with impunity. And all thoſe who had either ſuffered, or were apprehenſive of ſuffering, from the rapacity of theſe free booters, ſoon ſubmitted to Staniſlaus, whoſe power was gathering ſtrength every day.

The king of Sweden was then receiving, in his camp at Altranſtad, embaſſadors from almoſt all the princes in Chriſtendom. Some entreated him to quit the empire, others deſired him to turn his arms againſt the emperor; and it was then the general report, that he intended to join with France, in humbling the houſe of Auſtria. Among theſe ambaſſadors was the famous John duke of Marlborough, ſent by Anne, queen of Great Britain. This man, who never beſieged a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the moſt noble negociator of his time. He did France as much miſchief by his politics as by his arms. Mr. Fagel, ſecretary of the ſtates general, and a man of great merit,

merit, has been heard to ſay, that whenthe ſtates general had more than once reſolved to oppoſe the ſchemes which the duke was about to lay before them, the duke came, ſpoke to them in French, a language in which he expreſſed himſelf but very indifferently, and brought them all over to his opinion. This account I had from lord Bolingbroke.

In conjunction with prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinſius, the grand penſionary of Holland, he ſupported the whole weight of the war which the allies waged againſt France. He knew that Charles was incenſed againſt the empire and the emperor; that he was ſecretly ſolicited by the French; and that if this conqueror ſhould eſpouſe the cauſe of Lewis XIV. the allies muſt be entirely ruined.

True it is, Charles had given his word in 1700, that he would not intermeddle in the quarrel between Lewis XIV. and the allies; but the duke of Marlborough could not believe that any prince would be ſo great a ſlave to his word as not to ſacrifice it to his grandeur and intereſt. He therefore ſet out from the Hague with a reſolution to ſound the intentions of the king of Sweden. Mr. Fabricius, who then attended upon Charles XII. aſſured me, that the duke of Marlborough, on his arrival, applied ſecretly, not to count Piper, the prime miniſter, but to baron de Gortz, who now began to ſhare with Piper the confidence of the king. He even went to the quarters of Charles XII. in the coach of this gentleman*, between whom and the chancellor Piper together with Robinſon, the Engliſh miniſter, he ſpoke to the king in French. He told him that he ſhould eſteem it a ſingular happineſs, could he have an opportunity of learning under his command ſuch parts of the art of war as he did not yet underſtand. To this polite

* When the duke arrived at the quarters of count Piper, of whom he had demanded an audience, he was told the count was buſy, and obliged to wait half an hour before the Swediſh miniſter came down to receive him. Then the duke alighted from his coach, put on his hat, paſſed the count without ſaluting him, went aſide to the wall, where having ſtaid a few minutes, he returned and accoſted Piper with the moſt polite addreſs.

compliment the king made no return, and ſeemed to forget that it was Marlborough who was ſpeaking to him. He even thought, as I have been credibly informed, that the dreſs of this great man was too fine and coſtly: and that his air had in it too little of a ſoldier. The converſation was tedious and general, Charles XII. ſpeaking in the Swediſh tongue, and Robinſon ſerving as an interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in haſte to make propoſals: and who, by a long courſe of experience, had learned the art of diving into the real characters of men, and diſcovering the connection between their moſt ſecret thoughts and their actions, geſtures, and diſcourſe, regarded the king with the utmoſt attention. When he ſpoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majeſty a natural averſion to France; and remarked that he talked with pleaſure of the conqueſts of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and obſerved that his eyes always kindled at the name, notwithſtanding the calmneſs of the converſation. Beſides, he ſaw a map of Muſcovy lying before him upon the table. He wanted no more to convince him, that the real deſign and the ſole ambition of the king of Sweden was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the king of Poland. He was ſenſible that, if Charles remained in Saxony, it was only to impoſe ſome hard conditions on the emperor of Germany. He knew the emperor would make no reſiſtance, and that thus all diſputes would be eaſily accommodated. He left Charles XII. to follow the bent of his own mind; and ſatisfied with having diſcovered his intentions, he made him no propoſals. Theſe particulars I had from the ducheſs of Marlborough, his widow, who is ſtill alive *.

As few negociations are finiſhed without money, and as miniſters are ſometimes ſeen to ſell the hatred or favour of their maſters, it was the general opinion throughout all Europe, that the duke of Marlborough would not have ſucceeded ſo well with the king of Sweden, had

* The author wrote in 1727, ſince which time, as appears from other dates, the work hath undergone ſeveral corrections.

had he not made a handſome preſent to count Piper, whoſe memory ſtill labours under the imputation. For my own part, after having traced this report to its ſource, with all the care and accuracy of which I am maſter, I have found that Piper received a ſmall preſent from the emperor, by the hands of the count de Wratiſlau, with the conſent of his maſter, and not a farthing from the duke of Marlborough. Certain it is, Charles was ſo firmly reſolved to dethrone the emperor of Ruſſia, that he aſked no body's advice on that ſubject, nor needed the inſtigation of count Piper to prompt him to wreak his long meditated vengeance on the head of Peter Alexiowitz.

But what vindicates the character of that miniſter beyond all probability and cavil was the honour which, long after this period, was paid to his memory by Charles XII. who having heard that Piper was dead in Ruſſia, cauſed his corps to be tranſported to Stockholm, and gave him a magnificent funeral at his own expence.

The king, who had not as yet experienced any reverſe of fortune, nor even met with any interruption in his victories, thought one year would be ſufficient for dethroning the czar; after which, he imagined he might return in peace and erect himſelf into the arbiter of Europe. But, firſt of all he reſolved to humble the emperor of Germany.

The baron de Stralheim, the Swediſh envoy at Vienna, had had a quarrel at a public entertainment, with the count de Zobor, chamberlain of the emperor. The latter having refuſed to drink the health of Charles XII. and having bluntly declared that that prince had uſed his maſter ill, Stralheim gave him at once the lie and a box on the ear, and, beſides this inſult, boldly demanded a reparation from the imperial court. The emperor, afraid of diſpleaſing the king of Sweden, was obliged to baniſh his ſubject, whom he ought rather to have avenged. Charles, not ſatisfied even with this condeſcenſion, inſiſted that count Zobor ſhould be delivered up to him. The pride of the court of Vienna was forced to ſtoop. The count was put into the hands of the king,

king, who ſent him back, after having kept him for ſome time as a priſoner at Stettin.

He further demanded, contrary to all the laws of nations, that they ſhould deliver up to him fifteen hundred unhappy Muſcovites, who having eſcaped the fury of his arms, had fled for refuge into the empire. The emperor was obliged to yield even to this unreaſonable demand; and had not the Ruſſian envoy at Vienna given theſe unhappy wretches an opportunity of eſcaping by different roads, they muſt have been delivered into the hands of their enemies.

The third and laſt of his demands was the moſt daring. He declared himſelf the protector of the emperor's proteſtant ſubjects in Sileſia, a province belonging to the houſe of Auſtria, and not to the empire. He inſiſted that the emperor ſhould grant them the liberties and privileges which had been eſtabliſhed by the treaties of Weſtphalia, but which were extinguiſhed, or at leaſt eluded by thoſe of Ryſwick. The emperor, who wanted only to get rid of ſuch a dangerous neighbour, yielded once more, and granted all that he deſired. The Lutherans of Sileſia had above an hundred churches, which the Catholics were obliged to cede to them by this treaty: but of theſe advantages, which were now procured them by the king of Sweden's good fortune, they were afterwards deprived, when that prince was no longer in a condition to impoſe laws.

The emperor who made theſe forced confeſſions, and complied in every thing with the will of Charles XII. was called Joſeph; and was the eldeſt ſon of Leopold, and brother of Charles VI. who ſucceeded him. The pope's inter-nuncio, who then reſided at the court of Joſeph, reproached him in very ſevere terms, alledging that it was a moſt ſhameful condeſcenſion for a Catholic emperor, like him, to ſacrifice the intereſt of his own religion to that of heretics. "You may think yourſelf very happy, replied the emperor, with a ſmile, that the king of Sweden did not propoſe to make me a Lutheran; for if he had, I do not know what I might have done."

The

The count de Wratiſlau, his ambaſſador with Charles XII. brought to Leipſic the treaty in favour of the Sileſians, ſigned with his maſter's hand; upon which Charles ſaid, he was the emperor's very good friend. He was far from being pleaſed, however, with the court of Rome, which had employed all its arts and intrigues, in order to traverſe his ſcheme. He looked with the utmoſt contempt upon the weakneſs of that court, which having one half of Europe for its irreconcileable enemy, and placing no confidence in the other, can only ſupport its credit by the dexterity of its negociations; and he therefore reſolved to be revenged on his holineſs. He told the count de Wratiſlau, that the Swedes had formerly ſubdued Rome, and had not degenerated like her. He ſent the pope word, that he would one day redemand the effects which queen Chriſtina had left at Rome. It is hard to ſay how far this young conqueror might have carried his reſentment and his arms, had fortune favoured his deſigns. At that time nothing appeared impoſſible to him. He had even ſent ſeveral officers privately into Aſia and Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and to examine into the ſtrength of thoſe countries. Certain it is, that if ever prince was able to overturn the empire of the Turks and Perſians, and from thence paſs into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as brave, as enterprizing, more indefatigable, more robuſt, and more temperate; and the Swedes perhaps were better ſoldiers than the Macedonians. But ſuch projects, which are called divine when they ſucceed, are regarded only as chimeras when they prove abortive.

At laſt, having removed every difficulty, and accompliſhed all his deſigns; having humbled the emperor given laws in the empire, protected the Lutheran religion in the midſt of the Catholics, dethroned one king, crowned another, and rendered himſelf the terror of all the princes around him, he began to prepare for his departure. The pleaſures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had not made the leaſt alteration in his manner of living. He mounted his horſe thrice a-day, roſe at four in the morning, dreſſed himſelf

himſelf with his own hands, drank no wine, ſat at table only a quarter of an hour, exerciſed his troops every day, and knew no other pleaſure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes were ſtill uncertain whither their king intended to lead them. They had only ſome ſlight ſuſpicion that he meant to go to Moſcow. A few days before his departure, he ordered the grand marſhal of his houſhold, to give him in writing the route from Leipſick — at that word he pauſed a moment; and, leſt the marſhal ſhould diſcover his project, he added, with a ſmile — to all the capital cities of Europe. The mareſchal brought him a liſt of all theſe routes, at the head of which he placed, in great letters, "The route from Leipſick to Stockholm." The generality of Swedes were extremely deſirous of returning home; but the king was far from the thoughts of carrying them back to their native country. "Mr. Mareſchal, ſays he, I plainly ſee whither you would lead me; but we ſhall not return to Stockholm ſo ſoon."

The army was already on its march, and was paſſing by Dreſden. Charles was at the head of his men, always riding, as uſual, two or three hundred paces before his guards. All of a ſudden he vaniſhed from their ſight. Some officers advanced at full gallop to ſee where he was. They ran to all parts, but could not find him. In a moment the alarm was ſpread over the whole army. The troops were ordered to halt: the generals aſſembled together, and were already in the utmoſt conſternation. At laſt they learned from a Saxon, who was paſſing by, what was become of the king.

As he was paſſing ſo near Dreſden, he took it into his head to pay a viſit to Auguſtus. He entered the town on horſeback, followed by three or four general officers. The centries of the gates aſked them their names? Charles ſaid his name was Carl, and that he was a Draban; and all the reſt took fictitious names. Count Fleming, ſeeing them paſs through the town, had only time to run and inform his maſter. All that could poſſibly be done on ſuch an occaſion immediately preſented itſelf to the mind of that miniſter, who laid it before Auguſtus.

Auguſtus. But Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Auguſtus had time to recover from his ſurprize. Auguſtus was then ſick, and in his night-gown; but dreſſed himſelf in a hurry. Charles breakfaſted with him, as a traveller who comes to take leave of his friend; and then expreſſed his deſire of viewing the fortifications. During the ſhort time he employed in walking round them, a Livonian who had been condemned in Sweden, and now ſerved in the Saxon army, imagining that he could never find a more favourable opportunity of obtaining his pardon, entreated Auguſtus to aſk it of Charles, being fully convinced that his majeſty would not refuſe ſo ſmall a favour to a prince from whom he had taken a crown, and in whoſe power he now was. Auguſtus readily undertook the charge. He was then at ſome diſtance from the king, and was converſing with Hord, a Swediſh general. "I believe, ſaid he ſmiling, your maſter will not refuſe me." "You do not know him, replied general Hord, he will rather refuſe you here than any where elſe." Auguſtus however did not fail to prefer the petition in very preſſing terms; and Charles refuſed it in ſuch a manner as to prevent a repetition of the requeſt. After having paſſed ſome hours in this ſtrange viſit, he embraced Auguſtus, and departed. Upon rejoining his army, he found all his generals ſtill in conſternation. They told him they had determined to beſiege Dreſden, in caſe his majeſty had been detained a priſoner. "Right, ſaid the king, they durſt not." Next day, upon hearing the news that Auguſtus held an extraordinary council at Dreſden: "You ſee, ſaid baron Stralheim, they are deliberating upon what they ſhould have done yeſterday." A few days after Renſchild, coming to wait upon the king, expreſſed his ſurprize at this unaccountable viſit to Auguſtus. "I confided, ſaid Charles, in my good fortune; but I have ſeen the moment that might have proved prejudicial to me. Fleming had no mind that I ſhould leave Dreſden ſo ſoon."

THE

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK IV.

THE CONTENTS.

CHARLES quits SAXONY in a victorious Manner: Purſues the Czar: Shuts himſelf up in the UKRAINE: His Loſſes: His Wound: The Battle of PULTOWA: Conſequences of that Battle: CHARLES obliged to fly into TURKY: His reception in Beſſarabia.

CHARLES at laſt took leave of Saxony, in September 1707, followed by an army of forty-three thouſand men, formerly covered with ſteel, but now ſhining with gold and ſilver, and enriched with the ſpoils of Poland and Saxony. Every ſoldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money. Not only were all the regiments complete, but in every company there were ſeveral ſupernumeraries. Beſides this army, count Levenhaupt, one of his beſt generals, waited for him in Poland with twenty thouſand men. He had another army

army of fifteen thouſand in Finland; and freſh recruits were coming to him from Sweden. With all theſe forces it was not doubted but that he would eaſily dethrone the czar.

That emperor was then in Lithuania, endeavouring to reanimate a party which Auguſtus ſeemed to have abandoned. His troops, divided into ſeveral bodies, fled on all ſides at the firſt report of the king of Sweden's approach. He himſelf had enjoined his generals never to wait for the conqueror with unequal forces; and he was punctually obeyed.

The king of Sweden, in the midſt of his victorious march, received an ambaſſador from the Turks. The ambaſſador had his audience in count Piper's quarters; for it was always in that miniſter's tent that ceremonies of pomp were performed. On theſe occaſions he ſupported the dignity of his maſter, by an appearance which had in it ſomething magnificent; and the king, who was always worſe lodged, worſe ſerved, and more plainly dreſſed than the meaneſt officer in his army, was wont to ſay, that his palace was Piper's quarters. The Turkiſh ambaſſador preſented Charles with a hundred Swediſh ſoldiers, who having been taken by the Calmucks, and ſold in Turky, had been purchaſed by the grand ſeignior, and ſent back by that emperor as the moſt acceptable preſent he could make to his majeſty; not that the Ottoman pride condeſcended to pay homage to the glory of Charles XII. but becauſe the ſultan, the natural enemy of the Ruſſian and German emperors, was willing to fortify himſelf againſt them by the friendſhip of Sweden and the alliance of Poland. The ambaſſador complimented Staniſlaus upon his acceſſion to the throne; ſo that this king was acknowledged by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turky. There remained only the pope, who, before he would acknowledge him, reſolved to wait till time ſhould have ſettled on his head that crown of which a reverſe of fortune might eaſily deprive it.

Charles had no ſooner given audience to the ambaſſador of the Ottoman Porte, than he went in purſuit of the Muſcovites. The Ruſſians, in the courſe of the war,

war, had quitted Poland and returned to it above twenty different times. That country which is open on all ſides, and has no places of ſtrength to cut off the retreat of an army, gave the Muſcovites an opportunity of ſometimes reviſiting the very ſpot where they had formerly been beat, and even of penetrating as far into the heart of the kingdom as the conqueror himſelf. While Charles remained in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as Leopold, ſituated at the ſouthern extremity of Poland. Charles was then at Grodno in Lithuania, an hundred leagues to the northward of Leopold.

He left Staniſlaus in Poland to defend his new kingdom, with the aſſiſtance of ten thouſand Swedes and that of his own ſubjects, againſt all his enemies, both foreign and domeſtic. He then put himſelf at the head of his cavalry, and marched amidſt froſt and ſnow to Grodno, in the month of January 1708.

He had already paſſed the Niemen, about two leagues from the town: and the czar as yet knew nothing of his march. Upon the firſt news of the approach of the Swediſh army, the czar quits the town by the north gate, and Charles enters it by the ſouth. Charles had only ſix hundred of his guards with him; the reſt not being able to keep pace with his rapid march. The czar fled with above two thouſand men, from an apprehenſion that a whole army was entering Grodno. That very day he was informed by a Poliſh deſerter, that he had abandoned the place to no more than ſix hundred men, and that the main body of the army was ſtill at the diſtance of five leagues. He loſt no time: he detached fifteen hundred horſe, of his own troops in the evening, to ſurpriſe the king of Sweden in the town. This detachment, under favour of darkneſs, arrived undiſcovered at the firſt Swediſh guard, which, though conſiſting only of thirteen men, ſuſtained, for half a quarter of an hour, the efforts of the whole fifteen hundred. The king, who happened to be at the other end of the town, flew to their aſſiſtance with the reſt of his ſix hundred men; upon which the Ruſſians fled with precipitation. In a ſhort time his army arrived,

and

and he then ſet out in purſuit of the enemy. All the corps of the Ruſſian army, diſperſed through Lithuania, retired haſtily into the palatinate of Minſky, near the frontiers of Muſcovy, where their general rendezvous was appointed. The Swedes, who were likewiſe divided into ſeveral bodies, continued to purſue the enemy for more than thirty leagues. The fugitives and the purſuers made forced marches almoſt every day, though in the middle of winter. For a long time paſt all ſeaſons of the year were become indifferent to the Swedes and Ruſſians; and the only difference between them now aroſe from the terror of Charles's arms.

From Grodno to the Boriſthenes eaſtward, there is nothing but moraſſes, deſerts, and immenſe foreſts. In the cultivated ſpots there are no proviſions to be had, the peaſants burying under ground all their grain, and whatever elſe can be preſerved in their ſubterranean receptacles. In order to diſcover theſe hidden magazines, the earth muſt be pierced with long poles pointed with iron. The Muſcovites and the Swedes alternately made uſe of theſe proviſions; but they were not always to be found, and even then they were not ſufficient.

The king of Sweden, who had foreſeen theſe difficulties, had provided biſcuit for the ſubſiſtence of his army, and nothing could ſtop him in his march. After having traverſed the foreſt of Minſky, where he was every moment obliged to cut down trees in order to clear the road for his troops and baggage, he found himſelf, on the 25th of June 1708, on the banks of the river Berezine, oppoſite to Boriſlow.

In that place the czar had aſſembled the beſt part of his forces, and intrenched himſelf to great advantage. His deſign was to hinder the Swedes from croſſing the river. Charles poſted ſome regiments on the banks of the Berezine, over againſt Boriſlow, as if he meant to attempt a paſſage in the face of the enemy. Mean while he led his army three leagues higher up the river, throws a bridge acroſs it, cut his way through a body of three thouſand men who defended that paſs, and, without halting, marches againſt the main body of the enemy. The Ruſſians did not wait his approach, but

but decamped and retreated towards the Boriſthenes, ſpoiling all the roads, and deſtroying every thing in their way, in order, at leaſt, to retard the progreſs of the Swedes.

Charles ſurmounted every obſtacle, and ſtill advanced towards the Boriſthenes. In his way he met with twenty thouſand Muſcovites, intrenched in a place called Holloſin, behind a moraſs, which could not be approached without paſſing a river. Charles did not delay the attack till the reſt of his infantry ſhould arrive: he plunges into the water at the head of his foot-guards, and croſſes the river and the moraſs, the water frequently reaching above his ſhoulders. While he was thus preſſing forward to the enemy, he ordered his cavalry to go round the moraſs and take them in flank. The Muſcovites, ſurpriſed that no barrier could defend them, were inſtantly routed by the king, who attacked them on foot, and by the Swediſh cavalry.

The horſe, having forced their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midſt of the battle. He then mounted on horſeback; but ſome time after, obſerving in the field a young Swediſh gentleman, named Gyllenſtiern, for whom he had a great regard, wounded and unable to walk, he forced him to take his horſe, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this was perhaps the moſt glorious; this was the one in which he encountered the greateſt dangers, and diſplayed the moſt conſummate ſkill and prudence. The memory of it is ſtill preſerved by a medal, with this inſcription on one ſide, *Sylvæ, paludes, aggeres, hoſtes victi* *: and on the other this verſe of Lucan, *Victrices copias alium laturus in orbem* †.

The Ruſſians, chaſed from all their poſts, repaſſed the Boriſthenes, which divides Poland from Muſcovy. Charles did not give over the purſuit; but followed them acroſs the Boriſthenes, which he paſſed at Mohilou, the laſt town of Poland, and which ſometimes belongs

* Woods, marſhes, mounds and enemies conquered.
† Wafting his warlike troops to other worlds.

longs to the Poles, and ſometimes to the Ruſſians; a fate common to frontier places.

The czar thus ſeeing his empire, where he had lately eſtabliſhed the polite arts and a flouriſhing trade, expoſed to a war, which, in a ſhort time, might overturn all his mighty projects, and perhaps deprive him of his crown, began to think ſeriouſly of peace; and accordingly ventured to make ſome propoſals for that purpoſe, by means of a Poliſh gentleman, whom he ſent to the Swediſh army. Charles XII. who had not been uſed to grant peace to his enemies, except in their own capitals, replied, "I will treat with the czar at Moſcow." When this haughty anſwer was reported to the czar, "My brother Charles (ſays he) always affects to act the Alexander; but, I flatter myſelf, he will not find in me another Darius."

From Mohilou, the place where the king paſſed the Boriſthenes, as you advance towards the north, along the banks of the river, and always on the frontiers of Poland and Muſcovy, you meet with the country o Smolenſko, through which lies the great road that leads from Poland to Muſcovy. This way the czar directed his flight; and the king purſued him by long marches. Part of the Ruſſian rear-guard was frequently engaged with the dragoons of the Swediſh van-guard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themſelves even by conquering in theſe ſmall ſkirmiſhes, which were never deciſive, and in which they always loſt a number of men.

On the 22d of September, 1708, the king attacked, near Smolenſko, a body of ten thouſand horſe, and ſix thouſand Calmucks.

Theſe Calmucks are Tartars, living between the kingdom of Aſtracan, which is ſubject to the czar, and that of Samarcande, belonging to the Uſbeck Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The country of the Calmucks extend eaſtwards to the mountains which divide the mogul from the weſtern parts of Aſia. Thoſe who inhabit that part of the country which borders upon Aſtracan, are tributary to the czar, who pretends to an abſolute authority

authority over them; but their vagrant life hinders him from making good his claim, and obliges him to treat them in the ſame manner in which the grand ſignior treats the Arabs, ſometimes conniving at, and ſometimes puniſhing their robberies. There are always ſome of theſe Calmucks in the Ruſſian army; and the czar had even reduced them to a regular diſcipline, like the reſt of his ſoldiers.

The king attacked theſe troops with only ſix regiments of horſe, and four thouſand foot; broke their ranks at the firſt onſet, at the head of his Oſtrogothic regiment, and obliged them to fly. He purſued them thro' rugged and hollow ways, where the Calmucks lay concealed, who ſoon began to ſhew themſelves and cut off the regiment in which the king fought from the reſt of the Swediſh army. In an inſtant the Ruſſians and Calmucks ſurrounded this regiment, and penetrated even to the king. Two aids de camp who fought near him fell at his feet. The king's horſe was killed under him: and as one of his equerries was preſenting him with another, both the equerry and horſe were ſtruck dead upon the ſpot. Charles fought on foot, ſurrounded by ſome of his officers, who inſtantly flocked around him.

Many of them were taken, wounded, or ſlain, or puſhed to a great diſtance from the king by the crowds that aſſailed them; ſo that he was left at laſt with no more than five attendants. With his own hand he had killed above a dozen of the enemy, without receiving a ſingle wound, owing to that ſurpriſing good fortune which had hitherto attended him, and upon which he always relied. At length a colonel, named Dardof, forced his way through the Calmucks, with a ſingle company of his regiment, and arrived time enough to ſave the king. The reſt of the Swedes put the Tartars to the ſword. The army recovered its rank; Charles mounted his horſe, and, fatigued as he was, purſued the Ruſſians for two leagues.

The conqueror was ſtill in the great road to the capital of Muſcovy. The diſtance from Smolenſko, near which the battle was fought, to Moſcow, is about an hundred

hundred French leagues; and the army began to be in want of proviſion. The officers earneſtly entreated the king to wait till the general Levenhaupt, who was coming up with a reinforcement of fifteen thouſand men, ſhould arrive. The king, who ſeldom indeed took counſel of any one, not only rejected this wholeſome advice, but, to the great aſtoniſhment of all the army, quitted the road to Moſcow, and began to march ſouthwards towards the Ukraine, the country of the Coſſacks, lying between Little Tartary, Poland, and Muſcovy. This country extends about an hundred French leagues from ſouth to north, and almoſt as many from eaſt to weſt. It is divided into two parts, almoſt equal, by the Boriſthenes, which runs from the north-weſt to the ſouth-eaſt. The chief town is called Bathurin, and is ſituated upon the little river Sem. The northern part of the Ukraine is rich and well cultivated. The ſouthern, lying in the forty-eighth degree of latitude, is one of the moſt fertile countries in the world, and yet one of the moſt deſolate. Its bad form of government ſtifles in embryo, as it were, all the bleſſings which nature, if properly encouraged, would ſhower down upon the inhabitants. The people of theſe cantons neither ſow nor plant, becauſe the Tartars of Budziack, Precop, and Moldavia, all of them free-booters and banditti, would rob them of their harveſts.

Ukrania hath always aſpired to liberty; but being ſurrounded by Muſcovy, the dominions of the grand ſignior, and Poland, it has been obliged to chooſe a protector, and, conſequently, a maſter, in one of theſe three ſtates. The Ukranians at firſt put themſelves under the protection of the Poles, who treated them with great ſeverity. They afterwards ſubmitted to the Ruſſians, who governed them with deſpotic ſway. They had originally the privilege of electing a prince under the name of general; but they were ſoon deprived of that right; and their general was nominated by the court of Moſcow.

The perſon who then filled that ſtation was a Poliſh gentleman, named Mazeppa, and born in the palati-

nate

nate of Podolia. He had been brought up as a page to John Caſimir, and had received ſome tincture of learning in his court. An intrigue, which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Poliſh gentleman, having been diſcovered, the huſband cauſed him to be bound ſtark-naked upon a wild horſe, and let him go in that condition. The horſe, who had been brought out of Ukrania, returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa along with him, half-dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country-people gave him aſſiſtance; and he lived among them for a long time, and ſignalized himſelf in ſeveral excurſions againſt the Tartars. The ſuperiority of his knowledge gained him great reſpect among the Coſſacks; and his reputation daily encreaſing, the czar found it neceſſary to make him prince of Ukrania.

While he was one day at table with the czar at Moſcow, the emperor propoſed to him to diſcipline the Coſſacks, and to render them more dependent. Mazeppa replied, that the ſituation of Ukrania, and the genius of the nation, were inſuperable obſtacles to ſuch a ſcheme. The czar, who began to be over-heated with wine, and who had not always the command of his paſſions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled.

Mazeppa, on his return to Ukrania, formed the deſign of a revolt; and the execution of it was greatly facilitated by the Swediſh army, which ſoon after appeared on his frontiers. He reſolved to render himſelf independent, and to erect Ukrania and ſome other ruins of the Ruſſian empire into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprizing, and indefatigable, though advanced in years, he entered into a ſecret league with the king of Sweden, to haſten the downfal of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Deſna. Mazeppa promiſed to meet him there at the head of thirty thouſand men, with ammunition and proviſions, and all his treaſures, which were immenſe. The Swediſh army therefore continued its march on that ſide, to the great grief of all the officers, who knew

knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Coſſacks. Charles ſent orders to Levenhaupt to bring his troops and proviſions with all poſſible diſpatch into Ukrania, where he propoſed to paſs the winter, that, having once ſecured that country, he might the more eaſily conquer Muſcovy in the enſuing ſpring; and, in the mean time, he advanced towards the river Deſna, which falls into the Boriſthenes at Kiou.

The obſtructions they had hitherto found in their march were but trifling, in compariſon of what they met with in this new road. They were obliged to croſs a marſhy foreſt fifty leagues in length. General Lagercron, who marched before with five thouſand ſoldiers and pioneers, led the army aſtray to the eaſtward, thirty leagues from the right road. It was not till after a march of four days that the king diſcovered the miſtake. With great difficulty they regained the main road; but almoſt all their artillery and waggons were loſt, being either ſtuck faſt, or quite ſunk in the mud.

At laſt, after a march of twelve days, attended with ſo many vexations and untoward circumſtances, during which they had conſumed the ſmall quantity of biſcuit that was left, the army, exhauſted with hunger and fatigue, arrived on the banks of the Deſna, in the very ſpot which Mazeppa had marked out as the place of rendezvous; but inſtead of meeting with that prince, they found a body of Muſcovites advancing towards the other bank of the river. The king was aſtoniſhed, but reſolved immediately to paſs the Deſna and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were ſo ſteep, that they were obliged to let the ſoldiers down with ropes. They croſſed it in their uſual manner, ſome on floats which were made in haſte, and others by ſwimming. The body of Muſcovites which arrived, at the ſame time, did not exceed eight thouſand men; ſo that it made but little reſiſtance, and this obſtacle was alſo ſurmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this deſolate country, alike uncertain of his road and of Mazeppa's fidelity. That Coſſack appeared at laſt, but rather like a fugi-

tive than a powerful ally. The Muſcovites had diſcovered and defeated his deſign; they had fallen upon the Coſſacks and cut them in pieces. His principal friends, being taken ſword in hand, had, to the number of thirty, been broken upon the wheel; his towns were reduced to aſhes; his treaſures plundered; the proviſions he was preparing for the king of Sweden ſeized; and it was, with great difficulty, that he himſelf made his eſcape with ſix thouſand men, and ſome horſes loaden with gold and ſilver. However he gave the king ſome hopes that he ſhould be able to aſſiſt him by his intelligence in that unknown country, and by the affection of all the Coſſacks, who, being enraged againſt the Ruſſians, flocked to the camp and ſupplied the army with proviſions.

Charles hoped that general Levenhaupt at leaſt would come and repair this misfortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thouſand Swedes, who were better than an hundred thouſand Coſſacks, together with ammunition and proviſions. At length he arrived, in much the ſame condition with Mazeppa.

He had already paſſed the Boriſthenes above Mohilou, and advanced twenty leagues beyond it, on the road to the Ukraine. He was bringing the king a convoy of eight thouſand waggons, with the money which he had levied in his march through Lithuania. As he approached the town of Leſno, near the conflux of the rivers Pronia and Soſſa, which fall into the Boriſthenes far below, the czar appeared at the head of near forty thouſand men.

The Swediſh general, who had not ſixteen thouſand complete, ſcorned to ſhelter himſelf in a fortified camp. A long train of victories had inſpired the Swedes with ſo much confidence, that they never informed themſelves of the number of their enemies, but only of the place where they lay. Accordingly, on the ſeventh of October, 1708, in the afternoon, Levenhaupt advanced againſt them with great reſolution. In the firſt attack the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Ruſſians. The czar's army was thrown into confuſion, and fled on all ſides. The emperor of Ruſſia ſaw himſelf upon the

point

point of being entirely defeated. He was ſenſible that the ſafety of his dominions depended upon the ſucceſs of this day, and that he would be utterly ruined, ſhould Levenhaupt join the king of Sweden with a victorious army.

The moment he ſaw his troops begin to flinch, he ran to the rear guard, where the Coſſacks and Calmucks were poſted. "I charge you, ſaid he to them, to fire upon every one that runs away, and even to kill me, ſhould I be ſo cowardly as to fly." From thence he returned to the van guard, and rallied his troops in perſon, aſſiſted by the princes Menzikoff and Gallickſin. Levenhaupt, who had received ſtrict orders to rejoin his maſter, choſe rather to continue his march than renew the battle, imagining he had done enough to prevent the enemy from purſuing him.

Next morning, about eleven o'clock, the czar attacked him near a moraſs, and extended his lines with a view to ſurround him. The Swedes faced about on all ſides; and the battle was maintained for the ſpace of two hours with equal courage and obſtinacy. The loſs of the Muſcovites was three times greater than that of the Swedes; the former, however, ſtill kept their ground, and the victory was left undecided.

At four in the afternoon general Bayer brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed for the third time with more fury and eagerneſs than ever, and laſted till night put an end to the combat. At laſt ſuperior numbers prevailed, the Swedes were broke, routed, and driven back to their baggage. Levenhaupt rallied his troops behind the waggons. The Swedes were conquered, but diſdained to fly. They were ſtill about nine thouſand in number, and not ſo much as one of them deſerted. The general drew them up with as much eaſe as if they had not been vanquiſhed. The czar, on the other ſide, remained all night under arms; and forbad his officers, under pain of being caſhiered, and his ſoldiers under pain of death, to leave their ranks for the ſake of plunder.

Next morning at day break, he ordered a freſh aſſault. Levenhaupt had retired to an advantageous ſi-

tuation, at the diſtance of a few miles, after having nailed up part of his cannon, and ſet fire to his waggons.

The Muſcovites arrived time enough to prevent the whole convoy from being conſumed by the flames. They ſeized about ſix thouſand waggons, which they ſaved. The czar, deſirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, ſent one of his generals, named Phlug, to attack them again for the fifth time. That general offered them an honourable capitulation. Levenhaupt refuſed it, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former. Of the nine thouſand ſoldiers he had left, he loſt about one half in this action, and the other remained unbroken. At laſt, night coming on, Levenhaupt, after having ſuſtained five battles againſt forty thouſand men, paſſed the Soſſa with about five thouſand ſoldiers that remained. The czar loſt about ten thouſand men in theſe five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Levenhaupt that of diſputing the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat, without being obliged to ſurrender. Thus he arrived in his maſter's camp with the honour of having made ſuch a noble defence; but bringing with him neither ammunition nor an army.

By theſe means Charles found himſelf deſtitute of proviſions, cut off from all communication with Poland, and ſurrounded with enemies, in the heart of a country where he had no reſource but his own courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was ſtill more terrible in thoſe quarters of the world than in France, deſtroyed part of his army. Charles reſolved to brave the ſeaſons, as he had done his enemies; and ventured to make long marches with his troops during this mortal cold. It was in one of theſe marches that two thouſand men fell dead with cold before his eyes. The dragoons had no boots, and the foot ſoldiers were without ſhoes, and almoſt without cloaths. They were forced to make ſtockings of the ſkins of wild beaſts, in the beſt manner they could. They were frequently in want of bread. They were obliged to throw almoſt all their cannon into the marſhes

marſhes and rivers, for want of horſes to draw them; ſo that this army, which was once ſo flouriſhing, was reduced to twenty-four thouſand men ready to periſh with hunger. They no longer received any news from Sweden, nor were able to ſend any thither. In this condition only one officer complained. "What, ſaid the king to him, are you uneaſy at being ſo far from your wife? If you are a good ſoldier, I will lead you to ſuch a diſtance, that you ſhall hardly be able to receive news from Sweden once in three years."

The marquis de Brancas, afterwards ambaſſador in Sweden, told me, that a ſoldier ventured, in preſence of the whole army, to preſent to the king, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was the only food they then had, and of which they had not even a ſufficient quantity. The king received the bit of bread without the leaſt emotion, eat it up, and then ſaid coldly to the ſoldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." This incident, trifling as it is, if indeed any thing that increaſes reſpect and confidence can be ſaid to be trifling, contributed more than all the reſt to make the Swediſh army ſupport thoſe hardſhips, which would have been intolerable under any other general.

While he was in this ſituation, he at laſt received a packet from Stockholm, by which he was informed of the death of his ſiſter, the ducheſs of Holſtein, who was carried off by the ſmall-pox, in the month of December, 1708, in the twenty-ſeventh year of her age. She was a princeſs as mild and gentle as her brother was imperious in his diſpoſition, and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained a great affection for her; and was the more afflicted with her death, that now beginning to taſte of misfortunes himſelf, he was of courſe become the more ſuſceptible of tender impreſſions.

By this packet he was likewiſe informed, that they had raiſed money and troops, in obedience to his orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm there were near five hundred

leagues to travel, and an enemy ſuperior in number to engage.

The czar, who was as active as the king of Sweden, after having ſent ſome freſh troops to the aſſiſtance of the confederates in Poland, who under the command of general Siniauſki, exerted their joint efforts againſt Staniſlaus, immediately advanced into the Ukraine in the midſt of this ſevere winter, to make head againſt his Swediſh majeſty. Then he continued to purſue the political ſcheme he had formed of weakening his enemy by petty rencounters, wiſely judging that the Swediſh army muſt in the end be entirely ruined, as it could not poſſibly be recruited. The cold muſt certainly have been very ſevere, as it obliged the two monarchs to agree to a ſuſpenſion of arms. But on the firſt of February they renewed their military operations, in the midſt of froſt and ſnow.

After ſeveral ſlight ſkirmiſhes, and ſome loſſes, the king perceived in the month of April, that he had only eighteen thouſand Swedes remaining. Mazeppa, the prince of the Coſſacks, ſupplied them with proviſions; without his aſſiſtance, the army muſt have periſhed with want and hunger. At this conjuncture, the czar made propoſals to Mazeppa for ſubmitting again to his authority. But whether it was that the terrible puniſhment of the wheel, by which his friends had periſhed, made the Coſſack apprehend the ſame danger for himſelf, or that he was deſirous of revenging their death, he continued faithful to his new ally.

Charles, with his eighteen thouſand Swedes, had neither laid aſide the deſign nor the hopes of penetrating to Moſcow. Towards the end of May he laid ſiege to Pultowa, upon the river Vorſkla, at the eaſtern extremity of the Ukraine, and thirty leagues from the Boriſthenes. This country is inhabited by the Zaporavians, the moſt remarkable people in the univerſe. They are a collection of ancient Ruſſians, Poles, and Tartars, profeſſing a ſpecies of Chriſtianity, and exerciſing a kind of free-booting, ſomewhat a-kin to that of the buccaneers. They chuſe a chief, whom they frequently depoſe or ſtrangle. They allow no women to live

ive among them; but they carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues around, and bring them up in their own manners. The ſummer they always paſs in the open fields; in winter they ſhelter themſelves in large barns, containing four or five thouſand men. They fear nothing; they live free; they brave death for the ſmalleſt booty, with as much intrepidity as Charles XII. did, in order to obtain the power of beſtowing crowns. The czar gave them ſixty thouſand florins, hoping by this means to engage them in his intereſt. They took his money; and, influenced by the powerful eloquence of Mazeppa, declared in favour of Charles XII. but their ſervice was of very little conſequence, as they think it the moſt egregious folly to fight for any thing but plunder. It was no ſmall advantage, however, that they were prevented from doing harm. The number of their troops was, at moſt, but about two thouſand. One morning ten of their chiefs were preſented to the king; but it was with great difficulty they could be prevailed upon to remain ſober, as they commonly begin the day by getting drunk. They were brought to the intrenchments, where they ſhewed their dexterity in firing with long carbines; for being placed upon the mounds, they killed ſuch of the enemy as they picked out at the diſtance of two hundred paces. To theſe banditti Charles added ſome thouſands of Walachians, whom he had hired from the cham of Little Tartary; and thus laid ſiege to Pultowa, with all theſe troops of Zaporavians, Coſſacks, and Walachians, which joined to his eighteen thouſand Swedes, compoſed an army of about thirty thouſand men; but an army in a wretched condition, and in want of every thing. The czar had formed a magazine in Pultowa. If the king ſhould take it, he would open himſelf a way to Moſcovy; and be able at leaſt, amidſt the great abundance he would then poſſeſs, to wait the arrival of the ſuccours which he ſtill expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His only reſource therefore being in the conqueſt of Pultowa, he preſſed the ſiege of it with great vigour. Mazeppa, who carried on a correſpondence with ſome of the citizens, aſſured him

that he would ſoon be maſter of it; and his aſſurance revived the hopes of the ſoldiers, who conſidered the taking of Pultowa as the end of all their miſeries.

The king perceived, from the beginning of the ſiege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. In ſpite of all his precautions, prince Menzikoff threw ſome freſh troops into the town; by which means the garriſon was rendered almoſt five thouſand ſtrong.

They made ſeveral ſallies, and ſometimes with ſucceſs: they likewiſe ſprung a mine; but what ſaved the town from being taken was the approach of the czar, who was advancing with ſeventy thouſand men. Charles went to reconnoitre them on the twenty-ſeventh of May, which happened to be his birth-day, and beat one of their detachments; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a ſhot from a carbine, which pierced his boot and ſhattered the bone of his heel. There was not the leaſt alteration obſervable in his countenance, from which it could be ſuſpected that he had received a wound. He continued to give orders with great compoſure, and after this accident remained almoſt ſix hours on horſeback. One of his domeſtics obſerving that the ſole of the king's boot was bloody, made haſte to call the ſurgeons; and the pain was now become ſo exquiſite, that they were obliged to aſſiſt him in diſmounting, and to carry him to his tent. The ſurgeons examined the wound, and were of opinion that the leg muſt be cut off, which threw the army into the utmoſt conſternation. But one of the ſurgeons, named Newman who had more ſkill and courage than the reſt, affirmed, that by making deep inciſions he could ſave the king's leg. "Fall to work then preſently, ſaid the king to him: cut boldly and fear nothing." He himſelf held the leg with both his hands, and beheld the inciſions that were made in it, as if the operation had been performed upon another perſon.

As they were laying on the dreſſing, he ordered an aſſault to be made the next morning; but he had hardly given theſe orders, when he was informed that the whole army of the enemy was advancing againſt him; in

in conſequence of which he was obliged to alter his reſolution. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, ſaw himſelf cooped up between the Boriſthenes and the river that runs to Pultowa, in a deſert country, without any places of ſecurity, or ammunition, in the face of an army, which at once cut off his retreat, and prevented his being ſupplied with proviſions. In this extremity, he did not aſſemble a council of war, as, conſidering the perplexed ſituation of his affairs, he ought to have done; but on the ſeventh or eighth of July, in the evening, he ſent for velt-mareſchal Renſchild to his tent; and without deliberation, or the leaſt diſcompoſure, ordered him to make the neceſſary diſpoſitions for attacking the czar next day. Renſchild made no objections, and went to carry his orders into execution. At the door of the king's tent he met count Piper, with whom he had long lived on very bad terms, as frequently happens between the miniſter and the general. Piper aſked him if he had any news: No, ſaid the general coldly, and paſſed on to give his orders. As ſoon as count Piper had entered the tent; "Has Renſchild "told you nothing?" ſaid the king, "Nothing," replied Piper: "Well then, reſumed he, I tell you, that we ſhall give battle to-morrow." Count Piper was aſtoniſhed at ſuch a deſperate reſolution: but well knowing that it was impoſſible to make his maſter change his mind, he expreſſed his ſurprize only by his ſilence, and left Charles to ſleep till break of day.

It was on the eighth of July 1709, that the deciſive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two moſt famous monarchs that were then in the world. Charles XII. illuſtrious for nine years of victories; Peter Alexiowitz for nine years of pains taken to form troops equal to thoſe of Sweden: the one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilized his own: Charles, fond of dangers, and fighting for glory alone: Alexiowitz ſcorning to fly from danger, and never making war but from intereſted views: the Swediſh monarch liberal from an innate greatneſs of ſoul *; the Muſcovite

* We cannot perceive the leaſt tincture of liberality or of greatneſs

never granting favours but in order to ſerve ſome particular people: the former a prince of uncommon ſobriety and continence, naturally magnanimous, and never cruel but once; the latter having not yet worn off the roughneſs of his education, or the barbarity of his country, as much the object of terror to his ſubjects as of admiration to ſtrangers, and too prone to exceſſes, which even ſhortened his days. Charles had the title of "Invincible," of which a ſingle moment might deprive him; the neighbouring nations had already given Peter Alexiowitz the name of "Great;" which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not forfeit by a defeat.

In order to form a diſtinct idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we muſt figure to ourſelves Pultowa on the north, the camp of the king of Sweden on the ſouth, ſtretching a little towards the eaſt, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultowa on the north of the town, running from eaſt to weſt.

The czar had paſſed the river about a league from Pultowa, towards the weſt, and was beginning to form his camp.

At break of day the Swedes appeared before the trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the reſt were left in the camp, with about three thouſand men, and four thouſand remained with the baggage: ſo that the Swediſh army which advanced againſt the enemy, conſiſted of about one and twenty thouſand men, of which about ſixteen thouſand only were regular troops.

The

neſs of ſoul in Charles. He might indeed have made himſelf king of Poland by dint of violence; but the conſequence of that violence would have diſabled him from gratifying his revenge, which ſeems to have been the predominant paſſion of his ſoul. Had he aſcended the throne of Poland, he muſt have maintained an army of Swedes in that kingdom, conſequently he could not have advanced to the banks of the Boriſthenes in purſuit of Peter Alexiowitz. We find in Charles an inſenſibility of danger, a contempt of wealth, a clowniſhneſs of manners, a brutality of diſpoſition, an implacable thirſt of revenge and dominion; without taſte, ſentiment, or humanity.

The generals Renſchild, Roos, Levenhaupt, Slipenbak, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the prince of Wirtemberg, the king's relation, and ſome others, who had moſt of them ſeen the battle of Narva, put the ſubaltern officers in mind of that day, when eight thouſand Swedes defeated an army of eighty thouſand Muſcovites in their intrenchments. The officers exhorted the Soldiers by the ſame motive, and as they advanced they all encouraged one another.

Charles, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry, conducted the march. A party of horſe advanced by his orders to attack that of the enemy; and the battle began with this engagement at half an hour paſt four in the morning. The enemy's horſe was poſted towards the weſt, on the right ſide of the Ruſſian camp. Prince Menzikoff and count Gallowin had placed them at certain diſtances between redoubts lined with cannon. General Slipenbak, at the head of the Swedes, ruſhed upon them. All thoſe who have ſerved in the Swediſh troops are ſenſible that it is almoſt impoſſible to withſtand the fury of their firſt attack. The Muſcovite ſquadrons were broken and routed. The czar ran up to rally them in perſon; his hat was pierced with a muſket ball; Menzikoff had three horſes killed under him; and the Swedes cried out, Victory.

Charles did not doubt but the battle was gained. About midnight he had ſent general Creuts with five thouſand horſe or dragoons to take the enemy in flank, while he attacked them in front; but as his ill fortune would have it, Creuts miſtook his way, and did not make his appearance. The czar, who thought he was ruined, had time to rally his calvalry, and in his turn fell upon that of the king, which, not being ſupported by the detachment of Creuts, was likewiſe broken. Slipenbak was taken priſoner in this engagement. At the ſame time ſeventy-two pieces of cannon played from the camp upon the calvalry; and the Ruſſian foot opening their lines, advanced to attack Charles's infantry.

After this the czar detached prince Menzikoff to go and take poſt between Pultowa and the Swedes. Prince Menzikoff

Menzikoff executed his maſter's orders with dexterity and expedition. He not only cut off the communication between the Swediſh army and the camp before Pultowa; but having met with a corps de reſerve, he ſurrounded them and cut them to pieces. If Menzikoff performed this exploit of his own accord, Ruſſia is indebted to him for its preſervation: if it was by the orders of the czar, he was an adverſary worthy of Charles XII. Mean while the Ruſſian infantry came out of their lines, and advanced into the plain in order of battle. On the other hand, the Swediſh cavalry rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy; and the king, aſſiſted by veltmareſchal Renſchild, made the neceſſary diſpoſitions for a general engagement.

He ranged the few troops that were left him in two lines, his infantry occupying the centre and his cavalry forming the two wings. The czar diſpoſed his army in the ſame manner. He had the advantage of numbers, and of ſeventy-two pieces of cannon, while the Swedes had no more than four to oppoſe him, and began to be in want of powder.

The emperor of Muſcovy was in the centre of his army, having then only the title of major-general, and ſeemed to obey general Zermetoff. But he rode from rank to rank in the character of emperor, mounted on a Turkiſh horſe, which had been given him in a preſent by the grand ſignior, animating the captains and ſoldiers, and promiſing rewards to them all.

At nine in the morning the battle was renewed. One of the firſt diſcharges of the Ruſſian cannon carried off the two horſes of Charles's litter. He cauſed two others to be immediately put to it. A ſecond diſcharge broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of four and twenty Drabants, who mutually relieved each other in carrying him, one and twenty were killed. The Swedes, ſtruck with conſternation, began to ſtagger; and the cannon of the enemy continuing to mow them down, the firſt line fell back upon the ſecond, and the ſecond began to fly. In this laſt action it was only a ſingle line of ten thouſand Ruſſian infantry that

that routed the Swediſh army: ſo much were matters changed!

All the Swediſh writers alledge, that they would have gained the battle, if they had not committed ſeveral blunders; but all the officers affirm that it was a great blunder to give battle at all, and a greater ſtill to ſhut themſelves up in a deſert country, againſt the advice of the moſt prudent generals, in oppoſition to a warlike enemy, three times ſtronger than Charles, both in number of men, and in the many reſources from which the Swedes were entirely cut off. The remembrance of Narva was the chief cauſe of Charles's misfortune at Pultowa.

The prince of Wirtemberg, general Renſchild, and ſeveral principal officers were already made priſoners; the camp before Pultowa was ſtormed; and all was thrown into a confuſion which it was impoſſible to rectify. Count Piper, with ſome officers of the chancery, had left the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king; but ran about from one corner of the field to another. A major, called Bere, offered to conduct them to the baggage; but the clouds of duſt and ſmoke which covered the plain, and the diſſipation of mind ſo natural amidſt ſuch a deſolation, brought them ſtrait to the counterſcarp of the town, where they were all made priſoners by the garriſon.

The king ſcorned to fly, and yet was unable to defend himſelf. General Poniatowſky happened to be near him at that inſtant. He was a colonel of Staniſlaus's Swediſh guards, a man of extraordinary merit, and had been induced, from his ſtrong attachment to the perſon of Charles, to follow him into the Ukraine, without any poſt in the army. He was a man, who, in all the occurrences of life, and amidſt thoſe dangers when others would at moſt have diſplayed their courage, always took his meaſures with diſpatch, prudence, and ſucceſs. He made a ſign to two Drabants, who took the king under the arm, and placed him on his horſe, notwithſtanding the exquiſite pain of his wounds.

Poniatowſky,

Poniatowſky, though he had no command in the army, became on this occaſion a general thro' neceſſity, and drew up five hundred horſe near the king's perſon; ſome of them Drabants, others officers, and a few private troopers. This body being aſſembled and animated by the misfortune of their prince, forced their way through more than ten Ruſſian regiments, and conducted Charles through the midſt of the enemy for the ſpace of a league, to the baggage of the Swediſh army.

Charles, being cloſely purſued in his flight, had his horſe killed under him; and colonel Gietta, though wounded and ſpent with loſs of blood, gave him his. Thus, in the courſe of the flight, they twice put this conqueror on horſeback, though he had not been able to mount a horſe during the engagement.

This ſurpriſing retreat was of great conſequence in ſuch diſtreſsful circumſtances; but he was obliged to fly a ſtill greater diſtance. They found count Piper's coach among the baggage; for the king had never uſed one ſince he left Stockholm: they put him into this vehicle, and fled towards the Boriſthenes with great precipitation. The king, who, from the time of his being ſet on horſeback till his arrival at the baggage, had not ſpoke a ſingle word, at length enquired, what was become of count Piper? They told him he was taken priſoner, with all the officers of the chancery. "And general Renſchild and the duke of Wirtemberg?" added the king. "Yes," ſays Poniatowſky. "Priſoners to the Ruſſians!" reſumed Charles, ſhrugging up his ſhoulders; "Come then, let us rather go to the Turks." They could not perceive, however, the leaſt mark of dejection in his countenance; and had any one ſeen him at that time, without knowing his ſituation, he would never have ſuſpected that he was conquered and wounded.

While he was getting off, the Ruſſians ſeized his artillery in the camp before Pultowa, his baggage, and his military-cheſt, in which they found ſix millions in ſpecie, the ſpoils of Poland and Saxony. Nine thouſand men, partly Swedes and partly Coſſacks, were killed

killed in the battle, and about ſix thouſand taken priſoners. There ſtill remained about ſixteen thouſand men, including the Swedes, Poles, and Coſſacks, who fled towards the Boriſthenes, under the conduct of general Levenhaupt. He marched one way with theſe fugitive troops; and the king took another road with ſome of his horſe. The coach in which he rode broke down by the way, and they again ſent him on horſeback: and, to complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood; where, his courage being no longer able to ſupport his exhauſted ſpirits, the pain of his wound becoming more intolerable through fatigue, and his horſe falling under him through exceſſive wearineſs, he lay ſome hours at the foot of a tree, in danger of being ſurpriſed every moment by the conquerors, who were ſearching for him on all ſides.

At laſt, on the 9th or 10th of July, at night, he found himſelf on the banks of the Boriſthenes. Levenhaupt had juſt arrived with the ſhattered remains of the army. It was with an equal mixture of joy and ſorrow that the Swedes again beheld their king, whom they thought to be dead. The enemy was approaching. The Swedes had neither a bridge to paſs the river, nor time to make one, nor powder to defend themſelves, nor proviſions to ſupport an army, which had eat nothing for two days. But the remains of this army were Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Moſt of the officers imagined, that they were to halt there for the Ruſſians, without flinching; and that they would either conquer or die on the banks of the Boriſthenes. Charles would undoubtedly have taken this reſolution, had he not been exhauſted with weakneſs. His wound was now come to a ſuppuration, attended with a fever; and it hath been remarked, that men of the greateſt intrepidity, when ſeized with the fever that is common in a ſuppuration, loſe that impulſe to valour, which, like all other virtues, requires the direction of a clear head. Charles was no longer himſelf. This, at leaſt, is what I have been well aſſured of, and what indeed is extremely probable. They carried him along like a ſick perſon in a ſtate of inſenſibility.

ſibility. Happily there was ſtill left a ſorry calaſh, which by chance they had brought along with them: this they put on board of a little boat; and the king and general Mazeppa embarked in another. The latter had ſaved ſeveral coffers full of money; but the current being rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Coſſack threw more than three-fourths of his treaſures into the river to lighten the boat. Mullern, the king's chancellor, and count Poniatowſky, a man more neceſſary to the king than ever, on account of his admirable dexterity in finding expedients for all difficulties, croſſed over in other barks with ſome officers. Three hundred troopers of the king's guards, and a great number of Poles and Coſſacks, truſting to the goodneſs of their horſes, ventured to paſs the river by ſwimming. Their troop keeping cloſe together, reſiſted the current, and broke the waves; but all thoſe who attempted to paſs ſeparately, a little below, were carried down by the ſtream, and ſunk in the river. Of all the foot who attempted to paſs, there was not a ſingle man that reached the other ſide.

While the ſhattered remains of the army were in this extremity, prince Menzikoff came up with ten thouſand horſemen, having each a foot-ſoldier behind him. The carcaſes of the Swedes who had died by the way, of their wounds, fatigue and hunger, ſhewed prince Menzikoff but too plainly the road which the fugitive army had taken. The prince ſent a trumpet to the Swediſh general, to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were preſently diſpatched by Levenhaupt to receive the commands of the conqueror. Before that day, ſixteen thouſand ſoldiers of king Charles would have attacked the whole forces of the Ruſſian empire, and would have periſhed to a man rather than ſurrender. But after the loſs of a battle, and a flight of two days, deprived of the preſence of their prince, who was himſelf conſtrained to fly, the ſtrength of every ſoldier being exhauſted, and their courage no longer ſupported by the leaſt proſpect of relief, the love of life overcame their natural intrepidity. Colonel Troutfetre

Troutfetre alone, obſerving the Muſcovites approach, began to advance with one Swediſh battalion to attack them, hoping, by this means, to induce the reſt of the troops to follow his example. But Levenhaupt was obliged to oppoſe this unavailing ardour. The capitulation was ſettled, and the whole army were made priſoners of war. Some ſoldiers, reduced to deſpair at the thoughts of falling into the hands of the Muſcovites, threw themſelves into the Boriſthenes. Two officers of the regiment commanded by the brave Troutfetre, killed each other, and the reſt were made ſlaves. They all filed off in the preſence of prince Menzikoff, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thouſand Muſcovites had done nine years before at thoſe of the king of Sweden, at Narva. But whereas the king ſent back all the Ruſſians, whom he did not fear, the czar retained the Swedes that were taken at Pultowa

Theſe unhappy creatures were afterwards diſperſed through the czar's dominions, particularly in Siberia, a vaſt province of Great Tartary, which extends eaſtward to the frontiers of the Chineſe empire. In this barbarous country, where even the uſe of bread was unknown, the Swedes, who were become ingenious through neceſſity, exerciſed the trades and employments of which they had the leaſt notion. All the diſtinctions, which fortune makes among men, were there baniſhed. The officer, who could not follow any trade, was obliged to cleave and carry wood for the ſoldier, now turned taylor, clothier, joiner, maſon, or goldſmith, and who got a ſubſiſtence by his labour. Some of the officers became painters, and others architects. Some of them taught the languages and mathematics. They even eſtabliſhed ſome public ſchools, which, in time, became ſo uſeful and famous, that the citizens of Moſcow ſent their children thither for education.

Count Piper, the king of Sweden's firſt miniſter, was for a long time, confined in priſon at Peterſburgh. The czar was perſuaded, as well as the reſt of Europe, that this miniſter had ſold his maſter to the duke of Marlborough, and drawn on Muſcovy the arms of Sweden, which

which might have given peace to Europe; for which reaſon he rendered his confinement the more ſevere. Piper died in Muſcovy a few years after, little aſſiſted by his own family, which lived in opulence at Stockholm, and vainly lamented by his ſovereign, who would never condeſcend to offer a ranſom for his miniſter, which he feared the czar would not accept of, for no cartel of exchange had ever been ſettled between them.

The emperor of Muſcovy, elated with a joy which he was at no pains to conceal, received upon the field of battle the priſoners, whom they brought to him in crouds; and aſked every moment, "Where then is my brother Charles?"

He did the Swediſh generals the honour of inviting them to dine with him. Among other queſtions which he put to them, he aſked general Renſchild, what might be the number of his maſter's troops before the battle? Renſchild anſwered, That the king always kept the muſter-roll himſelf, and would never ſhew it to any one; but that, for his own part, he imagined the whole might be about thirty thouſand, of which eighteen thouſand were Swedes, and the reſt Coſſacks. The czar ſeemed to be ſurpriſed, and aſked how they durſt venture to penetrate into ſo diſtant a country, and lay ſiege to Pultowa with ſuch a handful of men? "We were not always conſulted, (replied the Swediſh general;) but, like faithful ſervants, we obeyed our maſter's orders, without ever preſuming to contradict them." The czar, upon receiving this anſwer, turned about to ſome of his courtiers, who were formerly ſuſpected of having engaged in a conſpiracy againſt him: "Ah! (ſays he) ſee how a king ſhould be ſerved;" and then taking a glaſs of wine, "To the health (ſays he) of my maſters in the art of war." Renſchild aſked him who were the perſons whom he honoured with ſo high a title? "You gentlemen, the Swediſh generals," replied the czar. "Your majeſty then (reſuming the count) is very ungrateful, to treat your maſters with ſo much ſeverity." After dinner the czar cauſed their ſwords to be reſtored to all the general officers, and behaved

aved to them like a prince who had a mind to give his ubjects a leſſon of generoſity and politeneſs, with hich he was well acquainted. But this ſame prince, ho treated the Swediſh generals with ſo much humaity, cauſed all the Coſſacks that fell into his hands to e broke upon the wheel.

Thus the Swediſh army, which left Saxony in ſuch triumphant manner, was now no more. One half f them had periſhed with hunger, and the other half ere either maſſacred or made ſlaves. Charles XII. ad loſt in one day the fruit of nine years labour, and f almoſt an hundred battles. He made his eſcape in wretched calaſh, attended by major-general Hoord, ho was dangerouſly wounded. The reſt of his little oop followed, ſome on foot, ſome on horſeback, and thers in waggons, through a deſert, where neither uts, tents, men, beaſts, nor roads were to be ſeen, very thing was wanting, even to water itſelf. It was ow the beginning of July; the country lay in the forty-ſeventh degree of latitude; the dry ſand of the deert rendered the heat of the ſun more inſupportable; he horſes fell by the way; and the men were ready to ie with thirſt. A brook of muddy water which they ound towards evening was all they met with; they illed ſome bottles with this water, which ſaved the lives f the king's little troop. After a march of five days, e at laſt found himſelf on the banks of the river Hypais, now called Bogh by the barbarians, who have ſpoiled ot only the general face, but even the very names of hoſe countries, which once flouriſhed ſo nobly in the poſſeſſion of the Greek colonies. This river joins the Boriſthenes ſome miles lower, and falls along with it nto the Black Sea.

On the other ſide of the Bogh, towards the ſouth, ſtands the little town of Oczakou, a frontier of the Turkiſh empire. The inhabitants ſeeing a body of ſoldiers approach, to whoſe dreſs and language they were intire ſtrangers, refuſed to carry them over the river, without an order from Mehemet Baſha, governor of Oczakou. The king ſent an expreſs to the governor,

vernor, demanding a paſſage; but the Turk not know-
ing what to do, in a country where one falſe ſtep fre-
quently coſts a man his life, durſt not venture to take
any thing upon himſelf, without having firſt obtained
permiſſion of the ſeraſkier of the province, who reſides
at Bender in Beſſarbia. While they were waiting for
this permiſſion, the Ruſſians who had made the king's
army priſoners had croſſed the Boriſthenes, and were
approaching to take him alſo. At laſt the baſha of Oc-
zakou ſent word to the king, that he would furniſh him
with one ſmall boat, to tranſport himſelf and two or
three of his attendants. In this extremity the Swedes
took by force what they could not obtain by gentle
means: ſome of them went over to the further ſide in
a ſmall ſkip, ſeized on ſome boats, and brought them
to the hither bank of the river. And happy it was
for them that they did ſo; for the maſters of the Turk-
iſh barks, fearing they ſhould looſe ſuch a favourable
opportunity of getting a good freight, came in crouds
to offer their ſervice. At that very inſtant arrived
the favourable anſwer of the ſeraſkier of Bender;
and the king had the mortification to ſee five hun-
dred of his men ſeized by the enemy, whoſe inſulting
bravadoes he even heard. The baſha of Oczakou,
by means of an interpreter, aſked his pardon for the
delays which had occaſioned the loſs of theſe five
hundred men, and humbly entreated him not to com-
plain of it to the grand ſignior. Charles promiſed
him that he would not; but, at the ſame time, gave
him a ſevere reprimand, as if he had been ſpeaking
to one of his own ſubjects.

The commander of Bender, who was likewiſe ſe-
raſkier, a title which anſwers to that of general, and
baſha of the province, which ſignifies governor and in-
tendant, forthwith ſent an aga to compliment the king,
and to offer him a magnificent tent, with proviſion,
baggage, waggons, and all the conveniencies, offi-
cers, and attendants neceſſary to conduct him to
Bender in a ſplendid manner; for it is the cuſtom of
the Turks, not only to defray the charges of ambaſ-
ſadors

dors to the place of their residence, but likewise to pply, with great liberality, the necessities of those rinces who take refuge among them, during the time f their stay.

THE

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK V.

THE CONTENTS.

State of the OTTOMAN PORTE. CHARLES refides near BENDER: His Employments: His Intrigues at the PORTE: His Defigns. AUGUSTUS reftored to his Throne. The King of DENMARK makes a Defcent upon SWEDEN. All the other Dominions of CHARLES are invaded. The Czar enters Moscow in Triumph. Affair of PRUTH. Hiftory of the Czarina, who, from a Country-girl, became Empreſs.

ACHMET III. was at that time emperor of the Turks. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, by a revolution not unlike to that which transferred the crown of England from James II. to his ſon-in-law William. Muſtapha being governed by his mufti, who was hated by all the Turks, provoked the whole empire to riſe againſt him. His army, by the

aſſiſtance of which he hoped to puniſh the malecontents, went over to the rebels. He was ſeized, and depoſed in form; and his brother taken from the ſeraglio and advanced to the throne, almoſt without ſpilling a ſingle drop of blood. Achmet ſhut up the depoſed ſultan in the ſeraglio at Conſtantinople, where he lived for ſeveral years, to the great aſtoniſhment of Turky, which had been wont to ſee the dethronement of her princes always followed by their death.

The new ſultan, as the only recompence for a crown which he owed to the miniſters, to the generals, to the officers of the janiſſaries, and, in a word, to thoſe who had had any hand in the revolution, put them all to death, one after another, for fear they ſhould one day attempt a ſecond revolution. By ſacrificing ſo many brave men, he weakened the ſtrength of the nation; but eſtabliſhed his throne, at leaſt, for ſome years. The next object of his attention was to amaſs riches. He was the firſt of the Ottoman race that ventured to make a ſmall alteration in the current coin, and to impoſe new taxes; but he was obliged to drop both theſe enterpriſes, for fear of an inſurrection. The rapacity and tyranny of the grand ſignior are ſeldom felt by any but the officers of the empire, who, whatever they may be in other reſpects, are domeſtic ſlaves to the ſultan; but the reſt of the Muſſulmans live in profound tranquillity, ſecure of their liberty, their lives, and fortunes *.

Such was the Turkiſh emperor to whom the king of Sweden fled for refuge. As ſoon as he ſet foot on the ſultan's territories, he wrote him a letter, which bears date the 13th of July, 1709. Several copies of this letter were ſpread abroad, all of which are now held to be ſpurious; but of all thoſe I have ſeen, there is not one

* We are ſurpriſed to hear our author ſtill harping upon this ſtring, namely, the liberty and ſecurity which the Turks enjoy; as it is well known that theſe miſerable creatures are every day ſubject to be pillaged and maſſacred by the ſoldiery; to be oppreſſed, ſtripped, and often puniſhed with death by the officers of juſtice, even without form of trial.

one but what ſufficiently marks the natural haughtineſs of the author, and is more ſuitable to his courage than his condition. The ſultan did not return him an anſwer till towards the end of September. The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles ſenſible what a mighty difference there was between a Turkiſh emperor and a king of part of Scandinavia, a conquered and fugitive Chriſtian. For the reſt, all theſe letters, which kings ſeldom write themſelves, are but vain formalities, which neither ſerve to diſcover the characters of princes, nor the ſtate of their affairs.

Though Charles XII. was in reality no better than a priſoner honourably treated in Turky, he yet formed the deſign of arming the Ottoman empire againſt his enemies. He flattered himſelf that he ſhould be able to reduce Poland under the yoke, and ſubdue Ruſſia. He had an envoy at Conſtantinople; but the perſon that ſerved him moſt effectually in his vaſt projects, was the count de Poniatowſky, who went to Conſtantinople without a commiſſion, and ſoon rendered himſelf neceſſary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and at laſt dangerous even to the grand viziers *.

One of thoſe who ſeconded his deſigns with the greateſt activity, was the phyſician Fonſeca, a Portugueze Jew, ſettled at Conſtantinople, a man of knowledge and addreſs, well qualified for the management of buſineſs, and perhaps the only philoſopher of his nation. His profeſſion procured him a free acceſs to the Ottoman Porte, and frequently gained him the confidence of the viziers. With this gentleman I was very well acquainted at Paris; and all the particulars I am going to relate were, he aſſured me, unqueſtionable truths. Count Poniatowſky hath informed me, both by letters and by word of mouth, that he had the addreſs to convey ſome letters to the ſultaneſs Valide, the mother of the reigning emperor, who had formerly been ill-uſed by her ſon, but now began to recover her influence in the ſeraglio.

* It was from this nobleman I received not only the remarks which have been publiſhed, and of which the chaplain Norberg hath made uſe, but likewiſe ſeveral other manuſcripts relating to this hiſtory.

raglio. A Jeweſs, who was often admitted to this princeſs, was perpetually recounting to her the exploits of the king of Sweden, and charmed her ear by theſe relations. The ſultaneſs, moved by that ſecret inclination with which moſt women feel themſelves inſpired in favour of extraordinary men, even without having ſeen them, openly eſpouſed the king's cauſe in the ſeraglio. She called him by no other name than that of her lion: "And when will you (would ſhe ſometimes ſay to the ſultan her ſon,) when will you help my lion to devour this czar?" She even diſpenſed with the rules of the ſeraglio, ſo far as to write ſeveral letters with her own hand to count Poniatowſky, in whoſe cuſtody they ſtill are, at the time of my writing this hiſtory.

Mean while the king was honourably conducted to Bender, thro' the deſert that was formerly called the Wilderneſs of the Getæ. The Turks took care that nothing ſhould be wanting on the road, to render his journey agreeable. A great many Poles, Swedes, and Coſſacks, who had eſcaped from the Muſcovites, came by different ways to increaſe his train on the road. By the time he reached Bender he had eighteen hundred men, who were all maintained and lodged both they and their horſes, at the expence of the grand ſignior.

The king choſe to encamp near Bender, rather than lodge in the town. The ſeraſkier Juſſuf baſha cauſed a magnificent tent to be erected for him; and tents were likewiſe provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after, Charles built a houſe in this place; the officers followed his example; and the ſoldiers raiſed barracks; ſo that his camp inſenſibly became a little town. As the king was not yet cured of his wound, he was obliged to have a carious bone extracted from his foot. But as ſoon as he could mount a horſe, he reſumed his wonted labours, always riſing before the ſun, tiring three horſes a-day, and exerciſing his ſoldiers. By way of amuſement, he ſometimes played at cheſs; and, as the characters of men are often diſcovered by the moſt trifling incidents, it may not be improper to obſerve, that he always advanced the

king firſt at that game, and made greater uſe of him than of any of the other men; by which he was always a loſer.

At Bender he had all the neceſſaries of life in great abundance, a felicity that ſeldom falls to the lot of a conquered and fugitive prince; for beſides the more than ſufficient quantity of proviſions, and the five hundred crowns a-day, which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he drew ſome money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Conſtantinople. Part of this money was employed in forwarding his intrigues in the ſeraglio, in buying the favours of the viziers, or procuring their ruin. The reſt he ſquandered away with great profuſion among his own officers and the janiſſaries who compoſed his guards at Bender. The diſpenſer of theſe acts of liberality was Grothuſen, his favourite, a man, who, contrary to the cuſtom of perſons in that ſtation, was as fond of giving as his maſter. He once brought him an account of ſixty thouſand crowns in two lines; ten thouſand crowns given to the Swedes and janiſſaries by the generous orders of his majeſty, and the reſt eat up by myſelf: "It is thus (ſays the king) that I would have my friends to give in their accompts. Mullern makes me read whole pages for the ſum of ten thouſand livres. I like the laconic ſtile of Grothuſen much better." One of his old officers, who was ſuſpected of being ſomewhat covetous, complained that his majeſty gave all to Grothuſen: "I give money (replies the king) to none but thoſe who know how to uſe it." This generoſity frequently reduced him to ſuch a low ebb, that he had not wherewithal to give. A better œconomy in his acts of generoſity would have been as much for his honour, and more for his intereſt; but it was the failing of this prince to carry all the virtues beyond the due bounds.

Great numbers of ſtrangers went from Conſtantinople to ſee him. The Turks, and the neighbouring Tartars came thither in crouds: all reſpected and admired him. His inflexible reſolution to abſtain from wine, and his regularity in aſſiſting twice a-day at public prayers,

prayers, made them ſay that he was a true Muſſulman, and inſpired them with an ardent deſire of marching along with him to the conqueſt of Muſcovy.

During his abode at Bender, which was much longer than he expected, he inſenſibly acquired a taſte for reading. Baron Fabricius, a gentleman of the bedchamber to the duke of Holſtein, a young man of an amiable character, who poſſeſſed that gaiety of temper, and eaſy turn of wit, which is ſo agreeable to princes, was the perſon who engaged him in theſe literary amuſements. He had been ſent to reſide with him at Bender in the character of envoy, to take care of the intereſts of the young duke of Holſtein; and he ſucceeded in his negociations by his open and agreeable behaviour. He had read all the beſt French authors. He perſuaded the king to read the tragedies of Peter Corneille, thoſe of Racine, and the works of Deſpreaux. The king had no reliſh for the ſatires of the laſt author, which indeed are far from being his beſt pieces; but he was very fond of his other writings. When he read that paſſage of the eighth ſatire, where the author treats Alexander as a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, Mithridates pleaſed him moſt, becauſe the ſituation of that monarch, who, though vanquiſhed, ſtill breathed vengeance, was ſo ſimilar to his own. He ſhewed Mr. Fabricius the paſſages that ſtruck him; but would never read any of them aloud, nor ever hazard a ſingle word in French. Nay, when he afterwards ſaw Mr. Deſaleurs, the French ambaſſador at the Porte, a man of diſtinguiſhed merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he anſwered him in Latin; and when Mr. Deſaleurs proteſted that he did not underſtand four words of that language, the king, rather than talk French, ſent for an interpreter.

Such were the occupations of Charles XII. at Bender, where he waited till a Turkiſh army ſhould come to his aſſiſtance. His envoy preſented memorials in his name to the grand vizier; and Poniatowſky ſupported

them with all his intereſt. This gentleman's addreſs ſucceeded in every thing; he was always dreſſed in the Turkiſh faſhion, and he had free acceſs to every place. The grand ſignior preſented him with a purſe of a thouſand ducats, and the grand vizier ſaid to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a ſword in the other; I will lead him to Moſcow at the head of two hundred thouſand men." The name of this grand vizier was Chourlouli Ali Baſha; he was the ſon of a peaſant of the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction is not reckoned a diſgrace among the Turks, who have no ranks of nobility, neither that which is annexed to certain employments, nor that which conſiſts in titles. With them the dignity and importance of a man's character depends entirely upon his perſonal ſervices. This is a cuſtom which prevails in moſt of the eaſtern countries; a cuſtom extremely natural, and which might be productive of the moſt beneficial effects, if poſts of honour were conferred on none but men of merit; but the viziers, for the moſt part, are no better than the creatures of a black eunuch, or a favourite female ſlave.

The firſt miniſter ſoon changed his mind. The king could do nothing but negociate, and the czar could give money, which he diſtributed with great profuſion; and he even employed the money of Charles XII. on this occaſion. The military-cheſt, which he took at Pultowa, furniſhed him with new arms againſt the vanquiſhed king; and it was no longer the queſtion at court, whether war ſhould be made upon the Ruſſians? The intereſt of the czar was all-powerful at the Porte, which granted ſuch honours to his envoy as the Muſcovite miniſters had never before enjoyed at Conſtantinople. They allowed him to have a ſeraglio, that is, a place in the quarter of the Franks, who converſe with the foreign miniſters. The czar thought he might even demand, that general Mazeppa ſhould be put into his hands, as Charles XII. had cauſed the unhappy Patkul to be delivered up to him. Chourlouli Ali Baſha could refuſe nothing to a prince who backed his demands with millions. Thus that ſame grand vizier, who

who had formerly promiſed, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to lead the king of Sweden into Muſcovy with two hundred thouſand men, had the aſſurance to make him a propoſal of conſenting to the ſacrifice of general Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at this demand. It is hard to ſay how far the vizier might have puſhed the affair, had not Mazeppa, who was now ſeventy years of age, died exactly at this juncture. The king's grief and indignation were greatly encreaſed, when he underſtood that Tolſtoy, now become the czar's ambaſſador at the Porte, was ſerved in public by the Swedes that had been made ſlaves at Pultowa, and that the brave ſoldiers were daily ſold in the market at Conſtantinople. Nay, the Ruſſian ambaſſador made no ſcruple of declaring openly, that the Muſſulman troops at Bender were placed there rather with a view to ſecure the king's perſon, than to do him any honour.

Charles, abandoned by the grand vizier, and vanquiſhed by the czar's money in Turky, as he had been by his arms in the Ukraine, ſaw himſelf deceived and deſpiſed by the Porte, and almoſt a priſoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to deſpair. Himſelf alone remained firm, and never appeared in the leaſt dejected. Convinced that the ſultan was ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli Ali, his grand vizier, he reſolved to acquaint him with them; and Poniatowſky undertook the execution of this hazardous enterprize. The grand ſignior goes every Friday to the Moſque, ſurrounded by his ſolaks, a kind of guards, whoſe turbans are adorned with ſuch high feathers as to conceal the ſultan from the view of the people. When any one has a petition to preſent to the grand ſignior, he endeavours to mingle with the guards, and holds the petition aloft. Sometimes the ſultan condeſcends to receive it himſelf; but, for the moſt part, he orders an aga to take charge of it, and upon his return from the moſque cauſes the petition to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with uſeleſs memorials and trifling petitions, inaſmuch as they write leſs at Conſtantinople in a whole year

than they do at Paris in one day. There is ſtill leſs danger of any memorials being preſented againſt the miniſters, to whom he commonly remits them unread. Poniatowſky had no other way of conveying the king of Sweden's complaint to the grand ſignior. He drew up a heavy charge againſt the grand vizier. Mr. de Feriol, who was then the French ambaſſador, and who gave me an account of the whole affair, got the memorial tranſlated into the Turkiſh tongue. A Greek was hired to preſent it: this Greek mingling with the guards of the grand ſignior, held the paper ſo high for ſo long a time, and made ſuch a noiſe, that the ſultan obſerved him, and took the memorial himſelf.

This method of preſenting memorials to the ſultan againſt his viziers was frequently employed. A Swede, called Leloing, gave in another petition a few days after. Thus in the Turkiſh empire Charles XII. was reduced to the neceſſity of uſing the ſame expedients with an oppreſſed ſubject.

Some days after this, the ſultan ſent the king of Sweden, as the only anſwer to his complaints, five and twenty Arabian horſes, one of which, that had carried his highneſs, was covered with a ſaddle and houſing enriched with precious ſtones, with ſtirrups of maſſy gold. This preſent was accompanied with an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and ſuch as gave reaſon to ſuſpect that the miniſter had done nothing without the ſultan's conſent. Chourlouli too, who was a perfect maſter of the art of diſſimulation, ſent the king five very curious horſes. But Charles, with a lofty air, ſaid to the perſon that brought them; "Go back to your maſter, and tell him that I don't receive preſents from my enemies."

Poniatowſky having already ventured to preſent a petition againſt the grand vizier, he next formed the bold deſign of depoſing him. Underſtanding that the vizier was diſagreeable to the ſultaneſs mother, and that he was hated by Kiſlar Aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and by the aga of the janiſſaries, he prompted them all three to ſpeak againſt him. It was

ſomething

ſomething very ſurpriſing to ſee a Chriſtian, a Pole, an uncommiſſioned agent of the king of Sweden, who had taken refuge among the Turks, caballing almoſt openly at the Porte againſt a viceroy of the Ottoman empire, who, at the ſame time, was both an able miniſter and a favourite of his maſter. Poniatowſky could never have ſucceeded, and the bare attempt would have coſt him his life, had not a power ſuperior to all thoſe that operated in his favour given a finiſhing ſtroke to the fortune of the grand vizier Chourlouli.

The ſultan had a young favourite, who afterwards governed the Ottoman empire, and was killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwaradin, which prince Eugene of Savoy gained over the Turks. His name was Coumourgi Ali-Baſha: his birth was much the ſame with that of Chourlouli; being the ſon of a coal-heaver, as Coumourgi imports, Coumour in the Turkiſh tongue ſignifying coal. The emperor Achmet II. uncle of Achmet III. having met Coumourgi, while yet an infant, in a little wood near Adrianople, was ſtruck with his extraordinary beauty, and cauſed him to be conducted to the ſeraglio. Muſtapha, the eldeſt ſon and ſucceſſor of Mahomet, was very fond of him; and Achmet III. made him his favourite. He had then no other place but that of ſelictar-aga, or ſword-bearer to the crown. His extreme youth did not allow him to make any open pretenſions to the poſt of grand vizier; and yet he had the ambition to aſpire to it. The Swediſh faction could never draw over this favourite to their ſide. He had never been a friend to Charles, or to any other Chriſtian prince, or to any of their miniſters; but, on this occaſion, he ſerved king Charles XII. without intending to do ſo. He joined with the ſultaneſs Valide and the great officers of the Porte, to haſten the ruin of Chourlouli, who was equally hated by them all. This old miniſter, who had ſerved his maſter for a long time, and with great fidelity, fell a victim to the caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a foreigner. He was ſtripped of his dignity and riches. His wife, who was the daughter of the late ſultan Muſtapha, was taken from him; and

himſelf was baniſhed to Caffa, formerly called Theodoſia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to ſay, the ſeal of the empire, was given to Numan Couprougli, grandſon to the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new vizier was, what ill-informed Chriſtians can hardly believe it poſſible for a Turk to be, a man of incorruptible virtue, a ſcrupulous obſerver of the law, and one who frequently oppoſed the rigid rules of juſtice to the wayward will of the ſultan. He could not endure to hear of a war againſt Muſcovy, which he conſidered as alike unjuſt and unneceſſary; but the ſame attachment to his law, that prevented his making war upon the czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him obſerve the rights of hoſpitality towards the king of Sweden: "The law forbids you, would he ſay to his maſter, to attack the czar, who has done you no injury; but it commands you to ſuccour the king of Sweden, who is an unfortunate prince in your dominions." He ſent his majeſty eight hundred purſes, (every purſe containing five hundred crowns,) and adviſed him to return peaceably to his own dominions, either through the territories of the emperor of Germany, or in ſome of the French veſſels which then lay in the harbour of Conſtantinople, and which Mr. de Feriol, the French ambaſſador at the Porte, offered to Charles to conduct him to Marſeilles. Count Poniatowſky carried on his negociations with greater activity than ever, and acquired ſuch a ſuperiority with an incorruptible vizier, as the gold of the Muſcovites was unable to counterbalance. The Ruſſian faction thought it would be their wiſeſt courſe to poiſon ſuch a dangerous negociator. They gained one of his domeſtics, who was to give him the poiſon in a diſh of coffee; but the crime was diſcovered before it was carried into execution. The poiſon was found in the hands of the domeſtic, contained in a ſmall vial, which was carried to the grand ſignior. The poiſoner was tried in a full divan, and condemned to the gallies; the juſtice of the Turks never inflicting death for thoſe crimes that have not been perpetrated.

Charles,

Charles, who could not be perſuaded but that, ſooner or later, he ſhould be able to engage the Turkiſh empire in a war againſt Muſcovy, rejected every propoſal that was made for his peaceable return home. He was continually repreſenting to the Turks the formidable power of that ſame czar, whom he had ſo long deſpiſed. His emiſſaries were perpetually inſinuating that Peter Alexiowitz wanted to make himſelf maſter of the navigation of the Black Sea; and that, after having ſubdued the Coſſacks, he would carry his arms into Crim Tartary. Sometimes theſe repreſentations aroused the Porte, at others the Ruſſian miniſters deſtroyed all their effect.

While Charles XII. made his fate depend upon the caprice of viziers, and while he was alternately receiving favours and affronts from a foreign power, preſenting petitions to the ſultan, and ſubſiſting upon his bounty in a deſert, all his enemies, awakened from their former lethargy, invaded his dominions.

The battle of Pultowa was the firſt ſignal to a revolution in Poland. Auguſtus returned to that country, proteſting againſt his abdication, and the peace of Altranſtad, and publicly accuſing Charles XII. whom he no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He impriſoned Fingſten and Imhoff, his plenipotentiaries, who had ſigned his abdication, as if in ſo doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their maſter. His Saxon troops, which had been the pretext of his dethronement, conducted him back to Warſaw, accompanied by moſt of the Poliſh palatines, who, having formerly ſworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the ſame to Staniſlaus, and were now come to do it again to Auguſtus. Siniawſki himſelf rejoined his party, and laying aſide the ambitious hopes of raiſing himſelf to the royal dignity, was content to remain grand-general of the crown. Fleming, his firſt miniſter, who had been obliged to leave Saxony, for fear of being delivered up with Patkul, now contributed by his addreſs to bring back to his maſter's intereſt a great part of the Poliſh nobility.

The pope abſolved the people from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Staniſlaus. This ſtep of the holy father, ſeaſonably taken, and ſupported by the forces of Auguſtus, was of conſiderable weight. It ſtrengthened the credit of the court of Rome in Poland, the natives of which had no inclination at that time to diſpute with the ſovereign pontiffs their chimerical right of interfering in the temporal concerns of princes. Every one was ready to ſubmit anew to the authority of Auguſtus, and willingly received an abſolution, which, however uſeleſs in itſelf, the nuncio took care to repreſent as abſolutely neceſſary.

The power of Charles and the grandeur of Sweden, were now drawing towards their laſt period. Above ten crowned heads had long beheld, with fear and envy, the Swediſh power extending itſelf far beyond its natural bounds, on the other other ſide of the Baltic Sea, from the Duna to the Elbe. The fall of Charles, and his abſence, revived the intereſted views, and rekindled the jealouſies of all theſe princes, which had for a long time been laid aſleep by treaties, and by their inability to break them.

The czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, improving his late victory, took Vibourg, and all Carelia, over-run Finland, laid ſiege to Riga, and ſent a body of forces into Poland to aid Auguſtus in recovering his throne. The czar was, at that time, what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the North; but all his meaſures were directed to the promotion of his own intereſt: whereas Charles had never been prompted by any other motive than thoſe of revenge and glory. The Swediſh monarch had ſuccoured his allies and cruſhed his enemies, without reaping any fruit from his victories. The czar behaving more like a prince, and leſs like a hero, would not aſſiſt the king of Poland, but on condition that Livonia ſhould be ceded to him; and that that province, for which Auguſtus had kindled the war, ſhould remain for ever in the poſſeſſion of the Muſcovites.

The king of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Auguſtus had that of Altranſtad, began to entertain

entertain thoughts of making himſelf maſter of the duchies of Holſtein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretenſions. The king of Pruſſia had ancient claims upon Swediſh Pomerania, which he now reſolved to revive. The duke of Mecklenburg was vexed to ſee that the Swedes were ſtill in poſſeſſion of Wiſmar, the fineſt town in the duchy. This prince was to marry a niece of the Ruſſian emperor; and the czar wanted only a pretext for eſtabliſhing himſelf in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, elector of Hanover, was likewiſe deſirous of enriching himſelf with Charles's ſpoils. The biſhop of Munſter too would have been willing enough to avail himſelf of ſome of his claims, had he been able to ſupport them.

About twelve or thirteen thouſand Swedes defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles poſſeſſed in Germany; and it was there that the war was moſt likely to begin. This ſtorm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of its provinces ſhall be reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was ſtill a greater difficulty. All theſe princes, except the czar, were then united againſt Lewis XIV. whoſe power, for a long time, had been as formidable to the empire as that of Charles.

At the beginning of this century, Germany found itſelf hard preſſed from ſouth to north by the armies of France and Sweden. The French had paſſed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder, and had their forces, victorious as they then were, been joined together, the empire had been utterly undone. But the ſame fatality that ruined Sweden had likewiſe humbled France. Sweden, however, had ſtill more reſources left; and Lewis XIV. carried on the war with vigour, though without ſucceſs. Should Pomerania and the duchy of Bremen become the theatre of the war, it was to be feared that the empire would ſuffer by ſuch an event; and that being weakened on that ſide, it would be leſs able to withſtand the arms of Lewis XIV. To prevent this danger, the emperor, the princes of the empire, Anne queen of England, and the ſtates-general of the United

United Provinces concluded at the Hague, about the end of the year 1709, one of the moſt ſingular treaties that ever was ſigned.

It was ſtipulated by theſe powers, that the war againſt the Swedes ſhould not be in Pomerania, nor in any of the German provinces; and that the enemies of Charles XII. ſhould be at liberty to attack him any where elſe. Even the czar and the king of Poland acceded to this treaty, in which they cauſed to be inſerted an article as extraordinary as the treaty itſelf, viz. that the twelve thouſand Swedes who were in Pomerania ſhould not be allowed to leave it in order to defend their other provinces.

To ſecure the execution of the treaty, and to maintain this imaginary neutrality, it was propoſed to aſſemble an army, which ſhould encamp on the banks of the Oder. An unheard-of novelty ſure to levy an army in order to prevent a war! nay, the very princes, who were to pay the army, were moſt of them concerned to commence a war which they thus affected to prevent. The treaty imported that the army ſhould be compoſed of the troops of the emperor, of the king of Pruſſia, of the elector of Hanover, of the landgrave of Heſſe, and of the biſhop of Munſter.

The iſſue of this project was ſuch as might naturally have been expected: it was not carried into execution. The princes who were to have furniſhed their contingents for completing the army, contributed nothing. There were not two regiments formed. Every body talked of a neutrality, but no body obſerved it; and the princes of the North, who had any quarrel with the king of Sweden, were left at full liberty to diſpute with each other the ſpoils of that prince.

During theſe tranſactions, the czar having quartered his troops in Lithuania, and given orders for puſhing the ſiege of Riga, returned to Moſcow to ſhew his people a ſight as new as any thing he had hitherto done in the kingdom. This was a triumph of nearly the ſame nature with that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moſcow on the firſt of January, 1710, under ſeven triumphant arches, erected in the ſtreets, and adorned

adorned with every thing which the climate could furniſh, or which a flouriſhing commerce (rendered ſuch by his care) could import. The proceſſion began with a regiment of guards, followed by the pieces of artillery taken from the Swedes at Leſno and Pultowa, each of which was drawn by eight horſes, covered with ſcarlet houſings hanging down to the ground. Next came the ſtandards, kettle-drums, and colours won at theſe two battles, carried by the officers and ſoldiers who had taken them. All theſe ſpoils were followed by the fineſt troops of the czar. After they had filed off, there appeared in a chariot made on purpoſe*, the litter of Charles XII. found in the field of battle at Pultowa, all ſhattered with two cannon ſhot. Behind the litter marched all the priſoners two and two, among whom was count Piper, firſt miniſter of Sweden, the famous mareſchal Renſchild, the count de Levenhaupt, the generals Slipenback, Stackelberg, and Hamilton, and all the officers, who were afterwards diſperſed through Great Ruſſia. Immediately after theſe appeared the czar himſelf, mounted on the ſame horſe which he rode at the battle of Pultowa: a little after him came the generals who had had a ſhare in the ſucceſs of the day. Next followed a regiment of guards and the whole was cloſed by the waggons loaded with the Swediſh ammunition.

This grand proceſſion was accompanied with the ringing of all the bells in Moſcow, with the ſound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, and an infinite number of muſical inſtruments, which played in concert, together with the vollies of two hundred pieces of cannon, amidſt the acclamations of five hundred thouſand men, who, at every ſtop the czar made in this triumphal entry, cried out, "Long live the emperor our father.

This

* Here Mr. Norberg, the confeſſor of Charles XII. finds fault with the author, and affirms that the litter was carried by the ſoldiers. With regard to theſe circumſtances (which are of great importance to be ſure) we appeal to thoſe who ſaw them.

This dazzling exhibition augmented the people's veneration for his perſon, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than all the ſolid advantages they had derived from his labours. Mean while he continued the blockade of Riga; and the generals made themſelves maſters of the reſt of Livonia and part of Finland. At the ſame time the king of Denmark came with his whole fleet to make a deſcent upon Sweden, where he landed ſeventeen thouſand men, and left them under the command of the count de Reventlau.

Sweden was, at that time, governed by a regency, compoſed of ſome ſenators, who were appointed by the king before he left Stockholm. The body of the ſenate, imagining that the government of right belonged to them, became jealous of the regency; and the ſtate ſuffered by theſe diviſions. But, when after the battle of Pultowa, the firſt news was brought to Stockholm, that the king was at Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had invaded Schonen, and taken the town of Helſimburg, all their jealouſies immediately vaniſhed, and they bent their whole attention towards the preſervation of the kingdom. Sweden was now drained, in a great meaſure, of regular troops; for though Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of ſmall armies, yet the innumerable battles he had fought in the ſpace of nine years, the neceſſity he was under of recruiting his forces with continual ſupplies, and maintaining his garriſons, and the ſtanding army he was conſtantly obliged to keep in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen and Verden; all theſe particulars had coſt Sweden, during the courſe of the war, above two hundred and fifty thouſand men; ſo that there were not eight thouſand of the ancient troops remaining, which, together with the new-raiſed militia, was the only reſources Sweden had to truſt to for the defence of her territories.

The nation is naturally warlike; and all his ſubjects inſenſibly imbibe the ſpirit of their ſovereign. From one end of the country to the other nothing was talked of but the prodigious atchievements of Charles and his generals, and of the old regiments that fought under them

them at Narva, Duna, Cliſſau, Pultuſk, and Holloſin. Hence the very loweſt of the Swedes were fired with a ſpirit of emulation and glory; and this heroic impulſe was greatly augmented by their affection for their king, their pity for his misfortunes, and their implacable hatred to the Danes. In ſeveral other countries the peaſants are ſlaves, or treated as ſuch; but here they compoſe a part of the ſtate, are conſidered as citizens, and, of conſequence, are capable of more exalted ſentiments; ſo that theſe new-raiſed militia became, in a ſhort time, the beſt troops of the North.

General Steinbock, by order of the regency, put himſelf at the head of eight thouſand of the ancient troops, and about twelve thouſand of theſe new militia, to go in purſuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Elſinburg, and had already extorted contributions from ſome of the more inland provinces.

There was neither time nor opportunity to give regimental cloaths to the new militia. Moſt of theſe boors came in their flaxen frocks, having piſtols tied to their girdles with cords. Steinbock, at the head of this ſtrange army, overtook the Danes about three leagues from Elſinburg on the tenth of March, 1710. He had deſigned to give his troops a few days reſt, to raiſe intrenchments, and to allow his new ſoldiers a ſufficient time to habituate themſelves to the face of the enemy; but all the peaſants called out for battle the very day on which they arrived.

I have been aſſured by ſome of the officers who were preſent, that they ſaw almoſt every individual ſoldier foaming with rage and choler; ſo great is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Steinbock availed himſelf of this ardour of ſpirit, which, in the day of battle, is of as much conſequence as military diſcipline. He attacked the Danes; and there one might have ſeen a thing, to which, perhaps, the whole hiſtory of mankind cannot furniſh above two ſimilar examples; the new-raiſed militia, in their firſt aſſault, equalled the intrepidity of veteran ſoldiers. Two regiments of theſe undiſciplined peaſants cut in pieces the regiment of the king

king of Denmark's guards, of which there remained only ten men alive.

The Danes, being entirely routed, retired under the cannon of Elſinburg. The paſſage from Sweden to Zealand is ſo ſhort, that the king of Denmark received the news of the defeat of his army in Sweden the ſame day on which it happened; and ſent his fleet to bring off the ſhattered remains of his army. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle; but unable to carry off their horſes, and unwilling to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the ſuburbs in Elſinburg, and ſet fire to their proviſions, burning their corn and baggage, and leaving in Elſinburg four thouſand wounded, the greateſt part of whom died with the infection, occaſioned by ſo many dead horſes and for want of proviſion, of which even their countrymen deprived them, in order to prevent the Swedes from enjoying any ſhare of it.

Mean while, the peaſants of Delecarlia having heard in the heart of their foreſts, that their king was a priſoner among the Turks, ſent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm, and offered to go at their own expence, to the number of twenty thouſand men, to reſcue their maſter from the hands of his enemies. This propoſal, which was better calculated to expreſs their courage and loyalty, than to produce any real advantage, was received with pleaſure, though it was not accepted; and the ſenators took care to acquaint the king with it, at the ſame time that they ſent him a circumſtantial account of the battle of Elſinburg.

Charles received this agreeable news in his camp near Bender, in July, 1710. And another event that happened ſoon after contributed ſtill more to ſtrengthen his hopes.

The grand vizier, Couprougli, who oppoſed all his deſigns, was diſmiſſed from his office, after having filled it for two months. The little court of Charles XII. and thoſe who ſtill adhered to him in Poland, gave out that Charles made and unmade the viziers, and governed the Turkiſh empire from his retreat at Bender. But he had no hand in the diſgrace of that favourite. The rigid

rigid probity of the vizier was ſaid to have been the ſole cauſe of his fall. His predeceſſor had paid the Janiſſaries not out of the Imperial treaſury, but with the money which he procured by extortion. Couprougli paid them out of the treaſury. Achmet reproached him with prefering the intereſt of the ſubject to that of the emperor: "Your predeceſſors, ſaid he, well knew how to find other means of paying my troops." If, replied the grand vizier, he had the art of enriching your highneſs by rapine, it is an art of which I am proud to ſay I am entirely ignorant."

The profound ſecrecy that prevails in the ſeraglio ſeldom allows ſuch particulars to tranſpire to the public; but this fact was publiſhed along with Couprougli's diſgrace. The vizier's boldneſs did not coſt him his head, becauſe true virtue is ſometimes reſpected, even while it diſpleaſes. He was permitted to retire to the iſland of Negropont. Theſe particulars I learned from the letters of Mr. Bru, my relation, firſt druggiſt to the Ottoman Porte, and I have retold them in order to diſplay the true ſpirit of that government.

After this the grand ſeignior recalled from Aleppo, Baltagi Mehemet, baſha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli. The baltagis of the ſeraglio ſo called from balta, which ſignifies an axe, are ſlaves employed to cut wood for the uſe of the princes of the Ottoman blood, and the ſultanas. This vizier had been a baltagi in his youth, and had ever ſince retained the name of that office, according to the cuſtom of the Turks, who are not aſhamed to take the name of their firſt profeſſion, or of that of their father, or even of the place of their birth.

While Baltagi Mehemet was a valet in the ſeraglio, he was ſo happy as to perform ſome little ſervices to prince Achmet, who was then a priſoner of ſtate in the reign of his Brother Muſtapha. The princes of the Ottoman blood are allowed to keep for their pleaſure a few women, who are paſt the age of child-bearing, (and that age arrives very early in Turky) but ſtill agreeable enough to pleaſe. As ſoon as Achmet became ſultan, he gave one of theſe female ſlaves, for whom he

he had had a great affection, in marriage to Baltagi Mehemet. This woman by her intrigues made her husband grand vizier; another intrigue displaced him; and a third made him grand vizier again.

When Baltagi Mehemet received the bull of the empire, he found the party of the king of Sweden prevailing in the seraglio. The sultaness Valide, Ali Coumourgi, the grand seignior's favourite, the kislar aga, chief of the black eunuchs, and the aga of the janissaries were all for a war against the czar: the sultan was fixed in the same resolution; and the first order he gave the grand vizier was to go and attack the Muscovites with two hundred thousand men. Baltagi had never made a campaign; yet was he not an ideot, as the Swedes, who were dissatisfied with his conduct, affected to represent him. Upon receiving from the grand seignior a sabre, adorned with precious stones, he addressed him in the following terms: "Your highness knows, said he, that I was brought up to handle an axe and cleave wood, not to wield a sword and command your armies. Nevertheless, I will endeavour to serve you to the best of my power; but should I fail of success, remember I have entreated you beforehand not to impute the blame to me." The sultan assured him he might depend upon his friendship; and the vizier prepared to carry his orders into execution.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Russian ambassador in the castle of the Seven Towers. 'Tis the custom of the Turks to begin by arresting the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Strict observers of hospitality in every thing else, in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. This injustice, however, they commit under the pretext of equity, believing themselves, or, at least, desirous to make others believe, that they never undertake any but just wars, because they are consecrated by the approbation of their mufti. Upon this principle they take up arms (as they imagine) to chastise the violators of treaties; and think they have a right to punish the ambassadors of those kings with whom they are

at

at enmity, as being accomplices in the treachery of their maſters.

Add to this the ridiculous contempt they affect to entertain for Chriſtian princes, and their ambaſſadors, the latter of whom they commonly conſider in no other light than as the conſuls of merchants.

The han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the kam, received orders to hold himſelf in readineſs with forty thouſand Tartars. This prince is ſovereign of Nagaï, Budziack, part of Circaſſia, and all Crim Tartary, a province anciently known by the name of Taurica Cherſoneſus, into which the Greeks carried their arms and commerce, and founded powerful cities; and into which, in after times, the Genoeſe penetrated, when they were maſters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be ſeen the ruins of ſome Greek cities, and ſome monuments of the Genoeſe, which ſtill ſubſiſt in the midſt of deſolation and barbarity.

The kam is called emperor by his own ſubjects; but with this grand title, he is, nevertheleſs, the ſlave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, from which the kams are ſprung, and the right they pretend to have to the empire of the Turks, upon the failure of the grand ſeignior's race, render their family reſpectable, and their perſons formidable even to the ſultan himſelf. 'Tis for this reaſon that the grand ſeignior dares not venture to deſtroy the race of the kams of Tartary; though indeed he ſeldom allows any of theſe princes to live to a great age. Their conduct is cloſely inſpected by the neighbouring baſhas: their dominions are ſurrounded with janiſſaries; their inclinations thwarted by the grand viziers; and their deſigns always ſuſpected. If the Tartars complain of the kam, the Porte depoſes him under that pretext. If he is too popular, it is ſtill a higher crime, for which he ſuffers a more ſevere puniſhment. Thus almoſt all of them are driven from ſovereign powers into exile, and end their days at Rhodes, which is commonly their priſon and their grave.

The Tartars, their ſubjects, are the moſt thieviſh people on earth, and, what is hardly to be credited, are,

are, at the ſame time the moſt hoſpitable. They will go fifty leagues from home to attack a caravan, or pillage a town; and yet when any ſtranger happens to travel through their country, he is not only received, lodged, and maintained every where, but through whatever place he paſſes, the inhabitants diſpute with each other the honour of having him for their gueſt; and the maſter of the houſe, his wife, and daughters, are ambitious to ſerve him. This inviolable regard to hoſpitality they have derived from their anceſtors the Scythians; and they ſtill preſerve it, becauſe the ſmall number of ſtrangers that travel among them, and the low prices of all ſorts of proviſions, render the practice of ſuch a virtue no ways burthenſome.

When the Tartars go to war, in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the grand ſeignior, but the booty they get is their only pay; and hence it is that they are much fitter for plundering than fighting.

The kam, won over to the king of Sweden's intereſt by preſents and promiſes, at firſt obtained leave to appoint the general rendezvous of the troops at Bender, and even under the eye of Charles XII. in order the more effectually to convince that monarch, that the war was undertaken ſolely for his ſake.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mehemet, who did not lie under the ſame engagements, would not flatter a foreign prince ſo highly. He changed the order; and Adrianople was the place fixed for the rendezvous of this great army. 'Tis always in the vaſt and fertile plains of Adrianople that the Turks aſſemble their armies, when they are going to make war upon the Chriſtians: there the troops that arrive from Aſia and Africa repoſe and refreſh themſelves for a few weeks; but the grand vizier, in order to anticipate the preparations of the czar, allowed the army but three days reſt, and then marched to the Danube, from whence he advanced into Beſſarabia.

The Turkiſh troops now-a-days are not near ſo formidable as they were in ancient times, when they conquered ſo many kingdoms in Aſia, Africa, and Europe; when,

when, by their great ſtrength of body, their valour, and numbers, they triumphed over enemies leſs robuſt and worſe diſciplined than themſelves. But now that the Chriſtians are more expert in the art of war, they ſeldom fail to beat the Turks in a pitched battle, and even with unequal numbers. If the Ottoman empire hath made ſome conqueſts in latter times, it hath only been over the republic of Venice, eſteemed more wiſe than warlike, defended by ſtrangers, and little ſuccoured by the Chriſtian princes, who are perpetually at variance among themſelves.

The janiſſaries and ſpahis always attack in a confuſed and diſorderly manner: they are incapable of obeying the commands of their general, or of recovering their ranks. Their cavalry, which, conſidering the goodneſs and fleetneſs of their horſes, ought to be excellent, is unable to ſuſtain the ſhock of the German cavalry. Their infantry cannot, even to this day, make uſe of fixed bayonets to any purpoſe. Add to this, that the Turks have not had an able general ſince the time of Couprougli, who conquered the iſle of Candia. A ſlave brought up in the indolence and ſilence of a ſeraglio, made a vizier by intereſt, and a general againſt his will, led a raw army, without diſcipline or experience, againſt Ruſſian troops, hardened by twelve campaigns, and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, in all appearance, muſt have vanquiſhed Baltagi Mehemet; but was guilty of the ſame fault, with regard to the Turks, which the king of Sweden had committed with regard to him: he deſpiſed his enemy too much. Upon the firſt news of the Turkiſh preparations, he left Moſcow, and, having given orders for turning the ſiege of Riga into a blockade, aſſembled a body of eighty thouſand men on the frontiers of Poland*. With this army he took the road through Moldavia

* The chaplain Norberg alledges, that the czar compelled every fourth man in his dominions, able to bear arms, to follow him to the field. Had that been the caſe, his army would have amounted, at leaſt, to two millions of men †.

† Our

davia and Walachia, formerly the country of the Dacee, but now inhabited by Greek Chriſtians, who are tributaries to the grand ſeignior.

Moldavia was, at that time, governed by prince Cantemir, a Grecian by birth, and who united in his perſon the talents of the ancient Greeks, the knowledge of letters and of arms. He was ſuppoſed to have ſprung from the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This extraction appeared more honourable than a Greek origin; and the reality of the deſcent is proved by the name of the conqueror. Timur, it is ſaid, reſembles Temir: the title of Can, which Timur poſſeſſed before he conquered Aſia, is included in the word Cantemir; therefore prince Cantemir is deſcended from Tamerlane. Such are the foundations of moſt genealogies!

From whatever family Cantemir was ſprung, he owed all his fortune to the Ottoman Porte. Hardly had he received the inveſtiture of his principality, when he betrayed his benefactor the Turkiſh emperor to the czar, from whom he expected greater advantages. He fondly imagined that the conqueror of Charles XII. would eaſily triumph over a vizier of ſo little reputation, who had never made a campaign, and who had choſen for his Kiaia, or lieutenant, the ſuperintendant of the cuſtoms in Turky. He made no queſtion but all his ſubjects would readily follow his ſtandard, as the Greek patriarchs encouraged him in his revolt. The czar, therefore having made a ſecret treaty with this prince,

† Our author ſeems to have forgot himſelf on this occaſion. In civilized and populous countries, one fifth of the inhabitants is computed as the proportion of men able to carry arms. M. de Voltaire ſays, the number of people in Muſcovy does not exceed fourteen or fifteen millions. The fifth prrt of fifteen amounts to three; every fourth man, therefore, if choſe fit for war, would bring the number to ſeven hundred and fifty thouſand. But great part of the czar's ſubjects conſiſted of people who never ſerved in war; ſuch as the Laplanders, the Samoiedes, and the clergy; ſo that we muſt underſtand Norberg as meaning no more than that Peter enliſted every fourth man of the peaſants actually found in the country, properly called Muſcovy.

prince, and received him into his army, advanced farther into the country; and in June 1711, arrived on the northern banks of the river Hieraſus, now Pruth, near Jazy, the capital of Moldavia.

As ſoon as the grand vizier heard that Peter Alexiowitz was advancing on that ſide, he immediately decamped, and following the courſe of the Danube, reſolved to croſs the river on a bridge of boats, near a town called Saccia, at the ſame place where Darius formerly built the bridge that long went by his name. The Turkiſh army proceeded with ſo much expedition, that it ſoon came in ſight of the Muſcovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The czar, ſure of the prince of Moldavia, never dreamed that the Moldavians would fail him. But it frequently happens that the intereſt of the prince and that of the ſubjects are extremely different. The Moldavians liked the Turkiſh government, which is never fatal to any but the grandees, and affects a great lenity and mildneſs to its tributary ſtates. They dreaded the Chriſtians, and eſpecially the Muſcovites, who had always treated them with inhumanity. They carried all their proviſions to the Ottoman army.

The undertakers who had engaged to furniſh the Ruſſians with proviſions, performed that contract with the grand vizier which they had made with the czar. The Walachians, who border upon the Moldavians, diſcovered the ſame attachment to the Turks; ſo much had the remembrance of the Ruſſian cruelty alienated all their affections.

The czar thus baulked of his hopes, which perhaps he had too raſhly entertained, ſaw his army on a ſudden deſtitute of forage and proviſions. The ſoldiers deſerted in troops; and the army was ſoon reduced to leſs than thirty thouſand men, ready to periſh with hunger. The czar experienced the ſame misfortunes upon the banks of the Pruth, in having delivered himſelf up to Cantemir, that Charles XII. had done at Pultowa, in relying upon Mazeppa. The Turks mean while paſſed the river, hemmed in the Ruſſians, and formed an entrenched camp before them. It is ſomewhat ſurpriſing that

that the czar did not diſpute the paſſage of the river, or, at leaſt, repair this error by attacking the Turks immediately after the paſſage, inſtead of giving them time to deſtroy his army with hunger and fatigue. It would ſeem, indeed, that Peter did every thing in this campaign to haſten his own ruin. He found himſelf without proviſion; the river Pruth behind him; an hundred and fifty thouſand Turks before him; while forty thouſand Tartars were continually harraſſing his army on the right and left. In this extremity, he made no ſcruple of acknowledging in public, that he was at leaſt reduced to as bad a condition as his brother Charles had been at Pultowa.

Count Poniatowſky, an indefatigable agent of the king of Sweden, was in the grand vizier's army, together with ſome Poles and Swedes, all of whom conſidered the ruin of the czar as inevitable.

As ſoon as Poniatowſky ſaw that the armies muſt infallibly come to an engagement, he ſent an expreſs to the king of Sweden, who immediately ſet out from Bender, accompanied with forty officers, anticipating the mighty pleaſure he ſhould have in fighting the emperor of Muſcovy. After many loſſes, and ſeveral marches in which he ſuffered ſeverely, the czar was driven back to the Pruth, without any other defence than a chevaux de frize, and a few waggons. A part of the janiſſaries and ſpahis attacked his army in this diſadvantageous ſituation; but their attack was diſorderly, and the Ruſſians defended themſelves with a firmneſs and reſolution, which nothing but deſpair and the preſence of their prince could inſpire.

The Turks were twice repulſed. Next day Mr. Poniatowſky adviſed the grand vizier to ſtarve the Ruſſian army, which being in want of every thing, would, together with its emperor, be obliged in a day's time to ſurrender at diſcretion.

The czar, ſince that time, hath more than once acknowledged, that, in the whole courſe of his life, he never felt any thing ſo exquiſitely tormenting as the perturbation of mind in which he paſſed that night. He revolved in his thoughts all that he had been doing for

r ſo many years, to promote the glory and happineſs f his country. He reflected that ſo many grand un- ertakings, which had always been interrupted by ars, were now, perhaps, going to periſh with him, efore they were fully accompliſhed. And he plainly erceived, that he muſt either be deſtroyed by famine, r attack about an hundred and eighty thouſand men ith feeble and diſpirited troops, diminiſhed one half their number, the cavalry almoſt entirely diſmounted, nd the infantry exhauſted with hunger and fatigue.

He ſent for general Czeremetof in the evening, and, ithout the leaſt heſitation, or even ſo much as aſking ny one's advice, ordered him to have every thing in eadineſs next morning for attacking the Turks with ixed bayonets.

He likewiſe gave expreſs orders that all the baggage hould be burnt, and that no officer ſhould keep above ne waggon; that ſo, in caſe of a defeat, the enemy ight not obtain the booty they expected.

Having ſettled every thing with the general relating o the battle, he retired to his tent, oppreſſed with rief, and racked with convulſions, a diſeaſe which of- en attacked him, and always recurred with redoubled iolence, when he was under any perturbation of mind. He gave peremptory orders that no one ſhould preſume, nder any pretext whatſoever, to enter his tent in the ight; not chooſing to receive any remonſtrances againſt a reſolution, which, however deſperate, was abſolutely neceſſary, and ſtill leſs that any one ſhould be a witneſs of the melancholy condition in which he was.

Mean while the greateſt part of the baggage was burnt, according to his orders. All the army followed the example, though with much reluctance; and ſeve- ral buried their moſt valuable effects in the earth. The general officers were already giving orders for the march, and endeavouring to inſpire the army with that courage which themſelves did not poſſeſs. The ſoldiers, ex- hauſted with hunger and fatigue, advanced without ſpirit and without hope. The women, with which the army was but too much crouded, ſet up the moſt

lamentable ſhrieks and cries, which contributed ſtill more to enervate the men; and next morning every one expected death or ſlavery, as the only alternative. This picture is by no means exaggerated: it is exactly agreeable to the accounts that were given by ſome officers who ſerved in the army.

There was, at that time, in the Ruſſian camp, a woman as extraordinary, perhaps, as the czar himſelf. As yet ſhe was known only by the name of Catharine. Her mother was a poor country-woman, called Erb-Magden, of the village of Ringen in Eſtonia, a province where the people held by villenage, and which was then ſubject to the Swedes. She never knew her father; but was baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the pariſh, out of pure charity, brought her up to the age of fourteen; after which ſhe went to ſervice at Marienburg, and hired herſelf to a Lutheran miniſter of that country, called Gluk.

In 1702, being then eighteen years of age, ſhe married a Swediſh dragoon. The day immediately ſucceeding her marriage, a party of the Swediſh troops having been defeated by the Muſcovites, the dragoon, who was in the action, diſappeared, and was never heard of more; but whether or not he was taken priſoner, his wife could never learn, nor indeed from that time could ſhe ever procure the leaſt intelligence about him.

A few days after, being made a priſoner herſelf by general Baur, ſhe entered into his ſervice, and afterwards into that of mareſchal Czeremetof, by whom ſhe was given to Menzikoff, a man who experienced the greateſt viciſſitudes of fortune, having from a paſtry-cook's boy been raiſed to the rank of a general and a prince, and at laſt ſtripped of every thing and baniſhed into Siberia, where he ended his days in miſery and deſpair.

The firſt time the emperor ſaw her was one evening as he was at ſupper with prince Menzikoff, when he inſtantly fell in love with her. He married her privately in 1707: not ſeduced into this ſtep by the artifices of the woman, but becauſe he found her poſſeſſed of a ſtrength

ſtrength and firmneſs of mind capable of ſeconding his ſchemes, and even of continuing them after his death. He had long before divorced his firſt wife Ottokeſa, the daughter of a boyard, who was accuſed of oppoſing the alterations which he was introducing into his dominions. This crime, in the eyes of the czar, was the moſt heinous of all others. He would have no body in his family whoſe thoughts did not exactly correſpond with his. He imagined he could diſcern in this foreign ſlave the qualities of a ſovereign, though ſhe had none of the virtues of her ſex. For her ſake he diſdained and broke through the prejudices that would have fettered a man of an ordinary capacity. He cauſed her to be crowned empreſs. The ſame talents which made her the wife of Peter Alexiowitz, procured her the empire after the death of her huſband; and Europe hath beheld with ſurprize a woman who could neither read * nor write, compenſating the want of education, and the weakneſs of her ſex, by her invincible courage and reſolution, and filling with glory the throne of a legiſlator.

When ſhe married the czar, ſhe renounced the Lutheran religion, in which ſhe had been born, and embraced that of Muſcovy. She was re-baptized, according to the rules of the Ruſſian church, and inſtead of Martha, ſhe took the name of Catharine, by which ſhe was ever after known. This woman, being at the camp at Pruth, held a council with the general officers and the vice-chancellor, Schaffiroff, while the czar was in his tent.

* The Sieur de la Motraye pretends that ſhe had a good education, and could both read and write with great facility. The contrary of this, however, is known to all the world. The peaſants of Livonia are never allowed to learn either to read or write, owing to an ancient privilege, which is termed the benefit of clergy, formerly eſtabliſhed among the barbarians who were converted to Chriſtianity, and ſtill ſubſiſting in this country. The memoirs from which we have extracted this anecdote, farther add, that the princeſs Elizabeth, afterwards empreſs, always ſigned for her mother, from the time ſhe could write.

The result of their deliberations was, that they must necessarily sue for a peace to the Turks, and endeavour to persuade the czar to agree to such a measure. The vice-chancellor wrote a letter to the grand-vizier in his master's name. This letter the czarina carried to the emperor's tent, notwithstanding his prohibition; and having with tears and intreaties prevailed upon him to sign it, she forthwith collected all her jewels, money, and most valuable effects, together with what money she could borrow from the general officers, and having by these means made up a considerable present, she sent it, with the czar's letter to Osman Aga, lieutenant to the grand vizier. Mehemet Baltagi replied with the lofty air of a vizier and a conqueror, "Let the czar send me his prime minister, and I shall then consider what is to be done." The vice-chancellor, Schaffirof, immediately repaired to the Turkish camp, with some presents which he publicly offered to the grand vizier, sufficient to shew him that they stood in need of his clemency, but too inconsiderable to corrupt his integrity.

The vizier at first demanded, that the czar, with his whole army, should surrender at discretion. The vice-chancellor replied, that his master was going to attack him in a quarter of an hour, and that the Russians would perish to a man, rather than submit to such dishonourable conditions. Schaffirof's applicatio nwas strongly seconded by the remonstrances of Osman.

Mehemet Baltagi was no warrior: he saw that the janissaries had been repulsed the day before; so that Osman easily prevailed upon him not to risk such certain advantages upon the fate of a battle. He accordingly granted a suspension of arms for six hours, in which time the terms of the treaty might be fully settled.

During the parley, there happened a trifling incident, which plainly shews that the Turks often keep their word with a more scrupulous exactness than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, relations of M. Brillo, lieutenant-colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, having gone to some distance in quest of forage, were taken prisoners by some Tartars, who brought

brought them to the camp, and offered to ſell them to an officer of the janiſſaries. The Turk, enraged at their preſumption, in having thus violated the truce, arreſted the Tartars, and carried them himſelf before the grand vizier, together with the two priſoners.

The vizier ſent back the two gentlemen to the czar's camp, and ordered the Tartars, who had been chiefly concerned in carrying them off, to be beheaded.

Mean while the Kam of Tartary oppoſed the concluſion of the treaty, which would deprive him of all hopes of plunder; and Poniatowſky ſeconded the Kam with the ſtrongeſt arguments. But Oſman carried his point againſt the importunity of the Tartar, and the inſinuations of Poniatowſky.

The vizier thought, that, by concluding an advantageous peace, he ſhould ſufficiently conſult the honour and intereſt of his maſter. He inſiſted that the Ruſſians ſhould reſtore Azoph, burn the gallies which lay in that harbour, demoliſh the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis, and deliver all the cannon and ammunition of theſe fortreſſes into the hands of the grand ſignior; that the czar ſhould withdraw his troops from Poland, give no farther diſturbance to the few Coſſacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to thoſe who were ſubject to the Turks; and that, for the future, he ſhould pay the Tartars an annual ſubſidy of forty thouſand ſequins; an odious tribute long ſince impoſed, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At laſt the treaty was going to be ſigned, without ſo much as making mention of the king of Sweden. All that Poniatowſky could obtain of the vizier was to inſert an article, by which the czar bound himſelf not to incommode the king in his return. And what is very remarkable, it was ſtipulated in this article, that the czar and Charles ſhould make peace if they thought proper, and could agree upon the terms.

On theſe conditions the czar was permitted to retire with his army, cannon, artillery, colours, and baggage. The Turks ſupplied him with proviſions, and he had plenty of every thing in his camp two hours

after the ſigning of the treaty, which was begun, concluded, and ſigned the twenty-firſt of July, 1711.

Juſt as the czar, now extricated from this terrible dilemma, was marching off with drums beating and colours flying, the king of Sweden arrived impatient for the fight, and happy in the thoughts of having his enemy in his power. He had rid poſt above fifty leagues from Bender to Jaza. He arrived the very moment that the Ruſſians were beginning to retire in peace; but he could not penetrate to the Turkiſh camp, without paſſing the Pruth by a bridge, three leagues diſtant. Charles XII. who never did any thing like other men, ſwam acroſs the river, at the hazard of being drowned, and traverſed the Ruſſian camp at the riſk of being taken. At length he reached the Turkiſh army, and alighted at the tent of Poniatowſky, who informed me of all theſe particulars, both by letter and word of mouth. The count came to him with a ſorrowful countenance, and told him that he had loſt an opportunity, which perhaps he would never be able to recover.

The king, enflamed with reſentment, flew ſtraight away to the tent of the grand vizier, and, with a ſtern air, reproached him with the treaty he had made, "I have a right, ſays the grand vizier, with a calm aſpect, either to make peace or war." "But, adds the king, have not you the whole Ruſſian army in your power?" "Our law commands us, replies the vizier with great gravity, to grant peace to our enemies, when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you, reſumes the king in a paſſion, to make a bad treaty, when you may impoſe what laws you pleaſe? had you not a fair opportunity, if you would have embraced it, of leading the czar a priſoner to Conſtantinople?"

The Turk, driven to this extremity, replied very coldly, "And who would have governed his empire in his abſence? It is not proper that all kings ſhould leave their dominions." Charles made no other anſwer, than by a ſmile of indignation. He then threw himſelf down upon a ſopha, and eying the vizier with an air

of

f contempt and reſentment, ſtretched out his leg, and ntangling his ſpur in the Turk's robe, purpoſely tore : after which, he roſe up, remounted his horſe, and ith a ſorrowful heart returned to Bender. Ponia- owſky continued ſome time longer with the grand vi- ier, to try if he could not prevail upon him by more entle means, to extort greater conceſſions from the zar; but the hour of prayer being come, the Turk, without anſwering a ſingle word, went to waſh and ttend divine ſervice.

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK VI.

THE CONTENTS.

Intrigues at the PORTE. The Kam of TARTARY and the Baſha of BENDER endeavour to force CHARLES to depart. He defends himſelf with forty domeſtics againſt the whole army, He is taken, and treated as a priſoner.

THE fortune of the king of Sweden, now ſo different from what it had formerly been, harraſſed him even in the moſt trifling circumſtances. On his return, he found his little camp at Bender, and all his apartments overflowed by the waters of the Nieſter. He retired to the diſtance of a few miles, near the village of Varnitza; and, as if he had had a ſecret foreboding of what was to befal him, he there built a large houſe of ſtone, capable, on occaſion, to ſuſtain an aſſault for a few hours. He even furniſhed it in a magnificent

nificent manner, contrary to his uſual cuſtom, in order the more effectually to attract the reſpect of the Turks.

He likewiſe built two other houſes, one for his chancery, and the other for his favourite Grothuſen, who kept a table at the king's expence. While Charles was thus employed in building near Bender, as if he had been always to remain in Turky, Baltagi Mehemet, dreading more than ever the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had ſent the reſident of the emperor of Germany into Vienna to demand a free paſſage for the king of Sweden through the hereditary dominions of the houſe of Auſtria. The envoy, in the ſpace of three weeks, brought back a promiſe from the imperial regency, importing that they would pay Charles XII. all due honours, and conduct him ſafely into Pomerania.

Application was made to the regency of Vienna, becauſe Charles, the emperor of Germany, who had ſucceeded Joſeph, was then in Spain diſputing the crown of that kingdom with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commiſſion at Vienna, the grand vizier ſent three baſhas to acquaint the king of Sweden, that he muſt quit the Turkiſh dominions

The king, being previouſly apprized of the orders with which they were charged, cauſed intimation to be given them, that if they preſumed to make him any propoſals contrary to his honour, or to the reſpect that was due to his character, he would forthwith have them all ſtrung up on a gallows. The baſha of Theſſalonica, who delivered the meſſage, diſguiſed the harſhneſs of the commiſſion, under the moſt reſpectful terms. Charles put an end to the audience, without deigning to give them an anſwer. His chancellor, Mullern, who ſtaid with the three baſhas, briefly explained to them his maſter's refuſal, which indeed they had ſufficiently underſtood by his profound ſilence.

The grand vizier was not to be diverted from his purpoſe; he ordered Iſmael Baſha, the new ſeraſquier of Bender, to threaten the king with the ſultan's indignation, if he did not immediately come to a reſolution.

The ſeraſquier was a man of a mild temper and engaging addreſs, which had gained him the good will of Charles, and the friendſhip of all the Swedes. The king entered into a conference with him; but it was, only to tell him, that he would not depart 'till Achmet had granted him two favours; the puniſhment of his grand vizier, and an hundred thouſand men to conduct him back to Poland.

Baltagi Mehemet was ſenſible that Charles remained in Turky only to ruin him. He therefore took care to place guards in all the roads from Bender to Conſtantinople, to intercept the king's letters. He did more; he retrenched his Thaim," that is to ſay, the proviſion which the Porte allows thoſe princes to whom ſhe grants an aſylum. That of the king of Sweden was immenſe, conſiſting of five hundred crowns a-day in money, and a profuſion of every thing neceſſary to maintain a court in ſplendor and affluence.

As ſoon as the king was informed that the vizier had preſumed to retrench his allowance, he turned to the ſteward of his houſhold and ſaid, " Hitherto you have only had two tables, I command you to have four for the future."

The officers of Charles XII. had been uſed to find nothing impoſſible which their maſter ordered; at preſent, however, they had neither money nor proviſions. They were forced to borrow at twenty, thirty, and forty per cent. of the officers, domeſtics, and janiſſaries, who were grown rich by the king's profuſion. M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holſtein, Jeffreys, the Engliſh miniſter, and their ſecretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king, with his uſual ſtatelineſs, and without any concern about the morrow, lived on theſe preſents, which could not have ſufficed him long. It was neceſſary to elude the vigilance of the guards, and to ſend privately to Conſtantinople to borrow money of the European merchants. But every body refuſed to lend a king who ſeemed to have put himſelf out of a condition of ever being able to repay them. One Engliſh merchant alone, called Cook, ventured to lend

lend him about forty thouſand crowns, content to loſe that ſum if the king of Sweden ſhould happen to die. This money was brought to the king's little camp, juſt as they began to be in want of every thing, and even to give over all hopes of any farther relief.

During this interval, M. Poniatowſky wrote, even from the camp of the grand vizier, an account of the campaign at Pruth, in which he accuſed Baltagi Mehemet of Perfidy and cowardice. An old janiſſary, provoked at the vizier's weakneſs, and gained moreover by Poniatowſky's liberality, undertook the delivery of the letter; and having obtained leave, preſented it with his own hand to the ſultan.

A few days after, Poniatowſky left the camp, and repaired to the Porte to form cabals, as uſual, againſt the grand vizier.

Every thing favoured his project. The czar, being now at liberty, was in no haſte to perform his engagements. The keys of Azoph were not yet come: the grand vizier was anſwerable for them, and juſtly dreading the indignation of his maſter, durſt not venture to appear in his preſence.

At that time the ſeraglio was filled more than ever with intrigues and factions. Theſe cabals, which prevail in all courts, and which in ours commonly end in the diſmiſſion, or, at moſt, in the baniſhment of the miniſter, never fail at Conſtantinople to occaſion the loſs of more than one head. The preſent plot proved fatal to the old vizier Chourlouli, and to Oſman, the lieutenant of Baltagi Mehemet, who had been the principal author of the peace of Pruth, and had afterwards obtained a conſiderable poſt at the Porte. Among Oſman's treaſures was found the Czarina's ring, and twenty thouſand pieces of gold, of Saxon and Ruſſian coin; a plain proof that money alone had extricated the czar from his dangerous ſituation, and ruined the fortunes of Charles. The vizier Baltagi Mehemet was baniſhed to the iſle of Lemnos, where he died three years after. The ſultan did not ſeize his effects, either at his baniſhment or his death. He was

far

far from being rich; and his poverty was a ſufficien vindication of his character.

This grand vizier was ſucceeded by Juſſuf, or Joſeph, whoſe fortune was as ſingular as that of his predeceſſors. Born on the frontiers of Muſcovy, and taken priſoner at ſix years of age, with his family, he had been ſold to a janiſſary. He was long a ſervant in the ſeraglio, and at laſt became the ſecond perſon in the empire where he had been a ſlave; but he was only the ſhadow of a miniſter. The young ſelictar, Ali Coumourgi, raiſed him to that ſlippery poſt, in hopes of one day filling it himſelf; and Juſſuf, his creature, had nothing to do but to ſet the ſeals of the empire to whatever the favourite deſired. From the very beginning of this vizier's miniſtry, the politics of the Ottoman court ſeemed to undergo a total alteration. The czar's plenipotentiaries, who reſided at Conſtantinople, either as miniſters or hoſtages, were treated with greater civility than ever. The grand vizier confirmed with them the peace of Pruth: but what mortified the king of Sweden more than all the reſt was, to hear that the ſecret alliance made with the czar at Conſtantinople, was brought about by the mediation of the Engliſh and Dutch ambaſſadors.

Conſtantinople, from the time of Charles's retreat to Bender, was become what Rome hath often been, the centre of the negociations of Chriſtendom. Count Deſaleurs, the French ambaſſador at the Porte, ſupported the intereſts of Charles and Staniſlaus: the emperor of Germany's miniſter oppoſed them; and the factions of Sweden and Muſcovy claſhed, as thoſe of France and Spain have long done at the court of Rome.

England and Holland ſeemed to be neuter, but were not ſo in reality. The new trade which the czar had opened at Peterſburg attracted the attention of theſe two commercial nations.

The Engliſh and the Dutch will always ſide with that prince who favours their trade the moſt *: there were

* We could wiſh this obſervation was true; but of the contrary we are feelingly convinced. The Engliſh have no commerce

were many advantages to be derived from a connection with the czar; and therefore it is no wonder that the miniſters of England and Holland ſhould ſerve him privately at the Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that Charles ſhould be immediately obliged to quit the Turkiſh dominions, whether it was that the czar hoped to ſeize him on the road, or that he thought him leſs formidable in his own kingdom than in Turky, where he was always on the point of arming the Ottoman troops againſt the Ruſſian empire.

Charles was perpetually ſoliciting the Porte to ſend him back through Poland with a numerous army. The divan was reſolved to ſend him back with a ſimple guard of ſeven or eight thouſand men, not as a king whom they meant to aſſiſt, but as a gueſt of whom they wanted to get rid. For this purpoſe the ſultan Achmet, wrote him the following letter.

" Moſt powerful among the king's that adore Jeſus, redreſſer of wrongs and injuries in the ports and republics of the South and North, ſhining in majeſty, lover of honour and glory, and of our ſublime Porte, Charles, king of Sweden, whoſe enterprizes may God crown with ſucceſs.

" As ſoon as the moſt illuſtrious Achmet, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, ſhall have the honour to deliver you this letter, adorned with our imperial ſeal, be perſuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions therein contained, viz. that though we had propoſed once more to march our ever-victorious army againſt the czar; yet that prince, in order to avoid the juſt reſentment which we had conceived at his delaying to execute the treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth, and afterwards renewed at our ſublime Porte, having ſurrendered into our hands the caſtle and city of Azoph, and endeavoured by the mediation of the Engliſh and Dutch ambaſſadors, our ancient allies, to cultivate a laſting peace with us, we have granted his requeſt,

merce with Muſcovy, but ſuch as is prejudicial to the true intereſt of their country.

requeſt, and delivered to his plenipotentiaries, who remain with us as hoſtages, our imperial ratification, after having received his from their hands.

" We have given to the moſt honourable and valiant Delvit Gherai, kam of Budziack, Crim Tartary, Nagay, and Circaſſia, and to our moſt ſage counſellor and noble ſeraſquier of Bender, Iſmael, (whom God preſerve and increaſe their magnificence and wiſdom) our inviolable and ſalutary orders for your return through Poland, according to your firſt intention, which hath again been preſented to us in your name. You muſt, therefore, prepare to ſet out next winter under the protection of providence, and with an honourable guard, in order to return to your own territories, taking care to paſs through thoſe of Poland in a friendly manner.

" Whatever is neceſſary for your journey ſhall be furniſhed you by my ſublime Porte, as well in money as in men, horſes, and waggons. Above all things, we adviſe and exhort you, to give the moſt diſtinct and expreſs orders to all the Swedes, and other perſons in your retinue, to commit no outrage, nor be guilty of any action that may tend either directly or indirectly to break this peace and alliance.

" By theſe means you will preſerve our good-will, of which we ſhall endeavour to give you as great and as frequent proofs as we ſhall have opportunities. The troops deſigned to attend you ſhall receive orders agreeable to our imperial intentions."

Given at our ſublime Porte of Conſtantinople, the fourteenth of the moon Rebyul Eurech, 1214, which anſwers to the 19th of April, 1712.

This letter did not deprive the king of Sweden of all hopes. He wrote to the ſultan, that he ſhould ever retain a grateful remembrance of the favours his highneſs had beſtowed upon him; but that he believed the ſultan was too juſt to ſend him back with the ſimple guard of a flying camp into a country that ſtill ſwarmed with the czar's troops. And indeed the emperor of Ruſſia, notwithſtanding

withſtanding the firſt article of the treaty of Pruth, by which he was obliged to withdraw all his troops from Poland, had ſent freſh ones into that kingdom; and it is ſomewhat ſurpriſing that the grand ſignior ſhould be ignorant of this particular.

The bad policy of the Porte, in being ſo much guided by the motives of vanity as to allow Chriſtian princes to have ambaſſadors at Conſtantinople, without ever ſending a ſingle agent to any Chriſtian court, gives the latter an opportunity of diſcovering, and ſometimes of directing the moſt ſecret reſolutions of the ſultan, and keeps the divan in a profound ignorance of what paſſes in the Chriſtian world.

The ſultan, ſhut up in his ſeraglio among his women and eunuchs, can only ſee with the eyes of his grand vizier. That miniſter, as inacceſſible as his maſter, his time wholly engroſſed with the intrigues of his ſeraglio, and having no foreign correſpondence, is commonly deceived himſelf, or elſe deceives the ſultan, who depoſes or cauſes him to be ſtrangled for the firſt offence, in order to chooſe another miniſter as ignorant or as perfidious, who behaves like his predeceſſors, and ſoon ſhares the ſame fate.

So great, for the moſt part, is the inactivity and ſupine negligence of this court, that were the Chriſtian princes to combine againſt it, their fleets might be at the Dardanelles, and their land forces at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would think of taking any meaſures for their defence; but their jarring intereſts, that muſt ever divide the Chriſtian world, will preſerve the Turks from a fate to which they ſeem at preſent expoſed, by their want of policy, and by their ignorance of the art of war, both by ſea and land.

So little was Achmet acquainted with what paſſed in Poland, that he ſent an aga to enquire whether, in reality, the czar's troops were ſtill in that country. The aga was accompanied by two ſecretaries of the king of Sweden, who underſtood the Turkiſh language, and were to ſerve as evidences againſt him, in caſe he ſhould give in a falſe report.

The

The aga ſaw the Ruſſian forces with his own eyes and informed the ſultan of every particular. Achmet, fired with indignation, was going to ſtrangle the grand vizier; but the favourite, who protected him, and who thought he ſhould have farther occaſion for him, obtained his pardon, and ſupported him ſome time longer in the miniſtry.

The cauſe of the Ruſſians was openly eſpouſed by the vizier, and ſecretly favoured by Ali Coumourgi, who had changed ſides. But the ſultan was ſo provoked, the infraction of the treaty was ſo manifeſt, and the Janiſſaries, who often make the miniſters, the favourites, and even the ſultans tremble, called out for war with ſo much importunity, that no one in the ſeraglio durſt offer a more moderate propoſal.

The grand ſignior immediately committed to the Seven Towers the Ruſſian ambaſſadors, who were already as much accuſtomed to go to priſon as to an audience. War was declared afreſh againſt the czar, the horſes tails were diſplayed, and orders were given to all the baſhas to aſſemble an army of two hundred thouſand men. The ſultan himſelf quitted Conſtantinople, and fixed his court at Adrianople, that he might be ſo much the nearer to the ſeat of the war.

Mean while a ſolemn embaſſy, ſent to the grand ſignior by Auguſtus and the republic of Poland, was upon the road to Adrianople. The palatine of Maſſovia was at the head of this embaſſy, with a retinue of above three hundred perſons.

All the members of the embaſſy were ſeized and impriſoned in one of the ſuburbs of the city. Never was the king of Sweden's party more highly flattered than on this occaſion; and yet theſe great preparations were rendered abortive, and all their hopes were again diſappointed.

If we may believe a public miniſter, a man of ſagacity and penetration, who then reſided at Conſtantinople, young Coumourgi had already formed other deſigns than that of diſputing a deſert country with the czar, by a war, the event of which muſt have been ſo uncertain. He had reſolved to ſtrip the Venetians of Pelopponneſus,

Pelopponnneſus, now called the Morea, and to make himſelf maſter of Hungary.

Theſe grand projects he propoſed to carry into execution, as ſoon as he ſhould have attained the poſt of prime vizier, from which he was ſtill excluded on account of his youth. In this view it was more for his advantage to be the ally than the enemy of the czar. It was neither his intereſt nor his inclination to keep the king of Sweden any longer; and much leſs to arm the Turkiſh empire in his favour. He not only reſolved to diſmiſs that prince, but he openly declared that, for the future, no Chriſtian miniſter ſhould be allowed to reſide at Conſtantinople; that all the common ambaſſadors were, at beſt, but honourable ſpies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers, and had too long influenced the intrigues of the ſeraglio; and that the Franks ſettled at Peſa and in the ſea-ports of the Levant, were merchants, who needed a conſul only, and not an ambaſſador. The grand vizier, who owed his poſt and even his life to the favourite, and who beſides ſtood greatly in awe of him, complied with his intentions with ſo much the more alacrity, as he had ſold himſelf to the Ruſſians, and hoped, by this means, to be revenged on the king of Sweden, who had endeavoured to ruin him. The mufti, a creature of Ali Coumourgi, was likewiſe an abſolute ſlave to his will. He had been a keen advocate for a war with Ruſſia, when the favourite was of that opinion; but the moment Coumourgi changed his mind, he pronounced it to be unjuſt. Thus the army was hardly aſſembled when they began to liſten to propoſals of peace. The vice chancellor, Shaffirof, and young Czeremetof, the czar's hoſtages and plenipotentiaries at the Porte, promiſed, after ſeveral negotiations, that their maſter ſhould withdraw his troops from Poland. The grand vizier, who well knew that the czar would never execute this treaty, made no ſcruple to ſign it; and the ſultan, ſatisfied with having, though only in appearance, impoſed laws upon the Ruſſians, continued ſtill at Adrianople. Thus, in leſs than ſix months, peace

was

was ratified with the czar, war declared, and peace renewed again.

The chief article of all these treaties was to oblige the king of Sweden to depart. The sultan was unwilling to endanger his own honour, and that of the Ottoman empire, by exposing the king to the risk of his being taking by his enemies on the road. It was stipulated that he should depart; but only on condition that the ambassadors of Poland and Muscovy should be responsible for the safety of his person. Accordingly these ambassadors swore in name of their masters, that neither the czar nor the king of Poland should molest him in his journey; and Charles was to engage, on his side, that he would not attempt to excite any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus settled the fate of Charles, Ismael, seraſquier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza, where the king was encamped, and acquainted him with the resolutions of the Porte, insinuating to him with great politeness, that there was no time for any longer delay, but that he must necessarily depart.

Charles made no other answer than this, that the grand seignior had promised him an army, and not a guard; and that kings ought to keep their word.

Mean while general Fleming, the minister and favourite of Augustus, maintained a secret correspondence with the kam of Tartary, and the seraſquier of Bender. La Mare, a French gentleman, a colonel in the service of Saxony, had made several journies from Bender to Dresden; and all these journies were strongly suspected.

At this very time, the king of Sweden caused a courier, whom Fleming had sent to the Tartarian prince, to be arrested on the Frontiers of Walachia. The letters were brought to him, and decyphered; and from them it clearly appeared that a correspondence was carried on between the Tartars and the court of Dresden; but the letters were conceived in such ambiguous and general terms, that it was difficult to discover, whether the intention of Augustus was only to detach the Turks

Turks from the intereſt of Sweden, or if he meant that the kam ſhould deliver Charles to the Saxons as he conducted him back to Poland.

We can hardly imagine that a prince, ſo generous as Auguſtus, would, by ſeizing the perſon of the king of Sweden, endanger the lives of his ambaſſadors, and of three hundred Poliſh gentlemen, who were detained at Adrianople as pledges for Charles's ſafety.

But it is well known, on the other hand, that Fleming, the miniſter of Auguſtus, and who had an obſolute power over his maſter, was a man devoid of every principle of virtue or honour. The injuries which the elector had received from the king of Sweden might ſeem to excuſe any kind of revenge; and it might be thought, that, if the court of Dreſden could buy Charles from the kam of Tartary, they would find it no difficult matter to purchaſe the liberty of the Poliſh hoſtages at the Ottoman Porte.

Theſe reaſons were carefully canvaſſed by the king, Mullern his privy chancellor, and Grothuſen his favourite. They read the letters again and again; and their unhappy condition making them more ſuſpicious, they reſolved to believe the worſt.

A few days after the king was confirmed in his ſuſpicions by the ſudden departure of count Sapieha, who had taken refuge with him, and now left him abauptly, in order to go to Poland to throw himſelf into the arms of Auguſtus. Upon any other occaſion he would have conſidered Sapieha only as a malecontent; but in his preſent delicate ſituation he at once concluded him to be a traitor. The repeated importunities with which he was preſſed to depart converted his ſuſpicions into certainty. The inflexible obſtinacy of his temper co-operating with theſe circumſtances, confirmed him in the opinion that they intended to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, though this plot hath never been fully proved.

Perhaps he was miſtaken in ſuppoſing that Auguſtus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his perſon; but he was much more deceived in relying on the aſſiſtance

ance of the Ottoman court. Be that as it will, he reſolved to gain time.

He told the baſha of Bender, that he could not depart, till he had received money to diſcharge his debts; for though his thaim had for a long time been duly paid, his unbounded liberality had always obliged him to borrow. The baſha aſked him how much he wanted? The king replied, at a venture, a thouſand purſes, amounting to fifteen hundred thouſand livres, full weight. The baſha acquainted the Porte with his requeſt. The ſultan inſtead of a thouſand purſes which Charles had required, granted him twelve hundred, and wrote the baſha the following letter.

The Grand Seignior's Letter to the Baſha of Bender.

" The deſign of this imperial letter is to acquaint you, that upon your repreſentation and requeſt, and upon that of the moſt noble Delvet Gherai Kam, to our ſublime Porte, our imperial munificence hath granted a thouſand purſes to the king of Sweden, which ſhall be ſent to Bender under the care and conduct of the moſt illuſtrious Mehemet Baſha, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, to remain in your cuſtody, till the departure of the king of Sweden, whoſe ſteps may God direct, and then to be given him, together with two hundred purſes more, as an overplus of our imperial liberality, above what he demands.

" With regard to the route of Poland, which he is reſolved to take, you and the kam, who are to attend him, ſhall be careful to purſue ſuch wiſe and prudent meaſures, as may during the whole journey, prevent the troops under your command, as well as thoſe of the king of Sweden, from committing any outrage, or being guilty of any action that may be deemed a violation of the peace which ſtill ſubſiſts between our ſublime Porte and the kingdom and republic of Poland; ſo the king may paſs in a friendly manner under our protection.

" By

" By doing this, (which you muſt expreſsly require him to do) he will receive from the Poles all the honour and reſpect that is due to his majeſty; as we have been aſſured by the ambaſſadors of Auguſtus and the republic, who, on this condition, have even offered themſelves, together with ſeveral others of the Poliſh nobility, if required, as hoſtages for the ſecurity of his paſſage.

" When the time which you and the moſt noble Delvet Gherai ſhall fix for the march, is come, you ſhall put yourſelf at the head of your brave ſoldiers, among whom ſhall be the Tartars, headed by the kam, and you ſhall conduct the king of Sweden and his men.

" And may it pleaſe the only God, the Almighty, to direct your ſteps and theirs. The baſha of Aulos ſhall continue at Bender with a regiment of Spahis and another of janiſſaries, to defend it in your abſence. And in the following our imperial orders and intentions in all theſe points and articles, you will deſerve the continuance of our imperial favour, as well as the praiſe and recompence due to all thoſe who obſerve them.

" Done at our imperial reſidence of Conſtantinople, the 2d of the moon Cheval, 1214 of the Hegira."

While they were waiting for this anſwer from the grand ſeignior, Charles wrote to the Porte, complaining of the treachery of which he ſuſpected the kam of Tartary to be guilty; but all the paſſages were well guarded, and, beſides the miniſter was againſt him, ſo that his letters never reached the ſultan. Nay, the vizier would not allow M. Deſaleurs to come to Adrianople, where the Porte then was, leſt that miniſter, who was an agent of the king of Sweden, ſhould endeavour to diſconcert the plan he had formed for obliging him to depart.

Charles,

Charles, enraged to ſee himſelf thus hunted, as it were, from the grand ſeignior's dominions, reſolved not to quit them at all.

He might have deſired to return through Germany, or to take ſhipping on the Black Sea, in order to ſail to Marſeilles by the Mediterranean, but he rather choſe to aſk nothing, and to wait the event.

When the twelve hundred purſes were arrived, his treaſurer Grothuſen, who, during his long abode in Turky, had learned the language of the country, went to wait upon the baſha without an interpreter, hoping to draw the money from him, and afterwards to form ſome new intrigue at the Porte, fooliſhly ſuppoſing, as he always did, that the Swediſh party would at laſt be able to arm the Ottoman empire againſt the czar.

Grothuſen told the baſha, that the king could not get ready his equipages without money: "But (ſaid the baſha) we ſhall defray all the expences of your departure; your maſter ſhall be at no charge while he continues under my protection."

Grothuſen replied, that the difference between the equipages of the Turks and thoſe of the Franks was ſo great, that they were obliged to apply to the Swediſh and Poliſh artificers at Varnitza.

He aſſured him that his maſter was willing to depart, and that this money would facilitate and haſten his departure. The too credulous baſha gave the twelve hundred purſes, and a few days after came to the king, and, in a moſt reſpectful manner, begged to receive his orders for his departure.

He was extremely ſurprized when the king told him he was not yet ready to go, and that he wanted a thouſand purſes more. The baſha, confounded at this anſwer, ſtood ſpeechleſs for a moment; then retiring to a window, he was obſerved to ſhed ſome tears. At laſt, addreſſing himſelf to the king; "I ſhall loſe my head (ſays he) for having obliged your majeſty: I have given you the twelve hundred purſes againſt the expreſs orders of my ſovereign." So ſaying, he took his leave with a dejected countenance.

The

The king ſtopped him, and ſaid that he would make an excuſe for him to the ſultan. "Ah! (replied the Turk, as he was going away) my maſter can puniſh faults, but cannot excuſe them."

Iſmael Baſha carried this piece of news to the kam, who having received the ſame orders with the baſha, not to ſuffer the twelve hundred purſes to be given to the king before his departure, and having conſented to the delivery of the money, was as apprehenſive as the baſha, of the grand ſeignior's indignation. They both wrote to the Porte in their own vindication, proteſting they did not give the twelve hundred purſes, but upon a ſolemn promiſe from the king's miniſter that he would depart without delay, and beſeeching his highneſs not to impute the king's refuſal to their diſobedience.

Charles, ſtill perſiſting in the belief that the kam and baſha meaned to deliver him up to his enemies, ordered M. Funk, who was then his envoy at the Ottoman court, to lay his complaints againſt them before the ſultan, and to aſk a thouſand purſes more. His great generoſity, and the little account he made of money, hindered him from perceiving the meaneſs of this propoſal. He did it with a view to be refuſed, and in order to find a freſh pretext for delaying his departure. But a man muſt be reduced to ſtrange extremities, to ſtand in need of ſuch artifices. Savari, his interpreter, an artful and enterprizing man, carried the letter to Adrianople, in ſpite of all the care which the grand vizier had taken to guard the paſſes.

Funk was obliged to preſent this dangerous requeſt. All the anſwer he received was to be thrown into priſon. The ſultan, in a paſſion, convoked an extraordinary divan, and, what very ſeldom happens, ſpoke himſelf on the occaſion. His ſpeech, according to the tranſlation which was then made of it, was conceived in the following terms:

"I hardly ever knew the king of Sweden but by his defeat at Pultowa, and by the application he made to me to grant him an aſylum in my dominions. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reaſon either to

to love or fear him. Nevertheleſs, without conſulting any other motives than the hoſpitality of a Muſſulman, and my own generoſity, which ſheds the dew of its favours upon the great as well as the ſmall, upon ſtrangers as well as my own ſubjects, I have received and aſſiſted him, his miniſters, officers, and ſoldiers, and, for the ſpace of three years and an half, have continued to load him with preſents.

"I have granted him a conſiderable guard to conduct him back to his own kingdom. He aſked a thouſand purſes to defray ſome expences, tho' I pay them all. Inſtead of a thouſand, I granted him twelve hundred. After having got theſe out of the hands of the ſeraſquier of Bender, he aſks a thouſand purſes more, and refuſes to depart, under a pretence that the guard is too ſmall, whereas, in fact, it is but too large to paſs thro' the country of a friend.

"I aſk you then, whether it be a violation of the laws of hoſpitality, to ſend back this prince; and whether foreign powers ought to accuſe me of cruelty and injuſtice, in caſe I ſhould be obliged to compel him to depart." All the members of the divan anſwered, that ſuch a conduct would be conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt rules of juſtice.

The mufti declared that Muſſulmans were not bound to ſhew any hoſpitality to infidels, and much leſs to the ungrateful; and he gave his fetſa, a kind of mandate which commonly accompanies the important orders of the grand ſeignior. Theſe fetſas are revered as oracles, though the perſons by whom they are given are as much ſlaves to the ſultan as any others.

The order and the fetſa were carried to Bender by the bouyouk Imraour, grand maſter of the horſe, and a Chiaou baſha, firſt uſher. The baſha of Bender received the order at the lodgings of the kam of Tartary; from whence he immediately repaired to Varnitza, to aſk the king whether he would depart in a friendly manner, or lay him under the neceſſity of executing the ſultan's orders.

Charles XII. being thus menaced, could not reſtrain his paſſion. "Obey your maſter, if you dare, (ſays he to

to the baſha) and leave my preſence immediately. The baſha, fired with indignation, returned at full gallop, contrary to the common cuſtom of the Turks; and meeting Fabricius by the way, he called out to him, without halting; "The king will not liſten to reaſon: you will ſee ſtrange things preſently." The ſame day he diſcontinued the ſupply of the king's proviſions, and removed the guard of Janiſſaries. He cauſed intimation to be made to the Poles and Coſſacks at Varnitza, that, if they had a mind to have any proviſions, they muſt quit the king of Sweden's camp, repair to Bender, and put themſelves under the protection of the Porte. Theſe orders were readily obeyed by all, and the king was left without any other attendants than the officers of his houſhold, and three hundred Swediſh ſoldiers, to make head againſt twenty thouſand Tartars, and ſix thouſand Turks.

There was now no proviſion in the camp either for man or horſe. The king ordered twenty of the fine Arabian horſes, which had been ſent him by the grand ſeignior, to be ſhot without the camp, adding, "I will have none of their proviſions nor their horſes." This was an excellent feaſt to the Tartars, who, as all the world knows, think horſe fleſh delicious fare. Mean while the Turks and Tartars inveſted the king's little camp on all ſides.

Charles, without the leaſt diſcompoſure, ordered his three hundred Swedes to raiſe regular intrenchments, in which work he himſelf aſſiſted; as did likewiſe his chancellor, his treaſurer, his ſecretaries, his valets de chambre, and all his domeſtics. Some barricadoed the windows, and others faſtened beams behind the doors, in the form of buttreſſes.

After the houſe was ſufficiently barricadoed, and the king had rode round his pretended fortifications, he ſat down to cheſs with his favourite Grothuſen, with as much tranquillity as if every thing had been perfectly ſafe and ſecure. Happily M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holſtein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but at a ſmall village between Varnitza and Bender, where Mr. Jeffreys, the Engliſh envoy to the king of Sweden,

likewiſe reſided. Theſe two miniſters, ſeeing the ſtorm ready to burſt, undertook the office of mediators between the king and the Turks. The kam, and eſpecially the baſha of Bender, who had no inclination to offer any violence to the Swediſh monarch, received the offers of theſe two miniſters with great ſatisfaction. They had two conferences at Bender, in which the uſher of the ſeraglio, and the grand maſter of the horſe, who had brought the ſultan's order, and the mufti's fetfa aſſiſted.

M. Fabricius * declared to them that his Swediſh majeſty had good reaſon to believe that they deſigned to deliver him up to his enemies in Poland. The kam, the baſha, and all the reſt, ſwore by their heads, and called God to witneſs, that they deteſted ſuch a horrible piece of treachery; and that they would ſhed the laſt drop of their blood, rather than ſuffer even the leaſt diſreſpect to be ſhewn to the king in Poland; adding, that they had in their hands the Ruſſian and Poliſh ambaſſadors, whoſe lives ſhould be anſwerable for any affront that ſhould be offered to the king of Sweden. In fine, they complained bitterly, that the king ſhould entertain ſuch injurious ſuſpicions of thoſe, who had received and treated him with ſo much humanity and politeneſs.

Though oaths are frequently the language of treachery, Fabricius could not help being convinced of their ſincerity. He thought he could diſcern in their proteſtations ſuch an air of veracity as falſehood can, at beſt, but imperfectly imitate. He was ſenſible there had been a ſecret correſpondence between the kam of Tartary and Auguſtus; but he was firmly perſuaded, that the only end of their negociation was to oblige Charles XII. to quit the dominions of the grand ſeignior. Whether Fabricius was miſtaken or not, he aſſured them, he would repreſent to the king the injuſtice of his ſuſpicions. "But, adds he, do you intend to compel him to depart?" "Yes, ſays the Baſha, for ſuch are

* The whole of this account is related by M. Fabricius in his letters.

are the orders of our maſter." He then entreated them to conſider ſeriouſly whether that order implied, that they ſhould ſhed the blood of a crowned head. "Yes, replies the kam, in a paſſion, if that crowned head diſobeys the grand ſeignior in his own dominions."

In the mean time, every thing being ready for the aſſault, the death of Charles XII. ſeemed inevitable. But as the ſultan had not given them poſitive orders to kill him in caſe of reſiſtance, the baſha prevailed upon the kam to let him diſpatch an expreſs to Adrianople, where the grand ſeignior then reſided, to receive the laſt orders of his highneſs.

Mr. Jeffreys, and M. Fabricius having procured this ſhort reſpite, haſtened to acquaint the king with it. They came with all the eagerneſs of people who bring good news; but were received very coldly. He called them unſolicited mediators, and ſtill perſiſted in the belief that the ſultan's order and the mufti's fetfa were both forged, inaſmuch as they had ſent to the Porte for freſh orders.

The Engliſh miniſter retired, with a firm reſolution to interfere no more in the affairs of a prince ſo very obſtinate and inflexible. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more accuſtomed to his humour than the Engliſh miniſter, remained with him, and earneſtly entreated him not to hazard ſo precious a life on ſuch an unneceſſary occaſion.

For anſwer, the king ſhewed him his fortifications, and begged he would employ his good offices in procuring him ſome proviſions. The Turks were eaſily prevailed upon to allow proviſions to be conveyed to the king's camp, until the return of the courier from Adrianople. The kam himſelf had ſtrictly enjoined his Tartars, who were eager for pillage, not to make any attempt againſt the Swedes till the arrival of freſh orders; ſo that Charles XII. went ſometimes out of his camp with forty horſe, and rode through the midſt of the Tartars, who, with great reſpect, left him a free paſſage. He even marched directly up to their lines, which, in-

ſtead of reſiſting, readily opened and allowed him to paſs.

At laſt, the order of the grand ſeignior being come, to put to the ſword all the Swedes that ſhould make the leaſt reſiſtance, and not even to ſpare the life of the king, the baſha had the complaiſance to ſhew the order to M. Fabricius, with a view of inducing him to make his laſt effort to bend, if poſſible, the obſtinacy of Charles. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with theſe ſad tidings. "Have you ſeen the order you mention, ſaid the king?" "I have," replied Fabricius. "Well then, go tell them in my name, that this ſecond order is another forgery of theirs, and that I will not depart." Fabricius threw himſelf at his feet, fell into a paſſion, and reproached him with his obſtinacy; but all to no purpeſe. "Go back to your Turks, ſaid the king to him, ſmiling; if they attack me, I know how to defend myſelf." The king's chaplains likewiſe fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expoſe to certain death the unhappy remains of Pultowa, and eſpecially his own ſacred perſon; aſſuring him, at the ſame time, that reſiſtance in ſuch a caſe was altogether unjuſtifiable; and that it was a direct violation of all the laws of hoſpitality, to reſolve to continue with ſtrangers againſt their will; eſpecially with thoſe ſtrangers who had ſo long and ſo generouſly ſupported him. The king, who had heard Fabricius with great patience, fell into a paſſion with his prieſts, and told them, that he had taken them to pray for him, and not to give him advice.

The generals Hord and Dardoff, who had always declared againſt hazarding a battle which could not fail to be attended with fatal conſequences, ſhewed the king their breaſts covered with wounds, which they had received in his ſervice; and aſſuring him that they were ready to lay down their lives for his ſake, begged that it might be, at leaſt, upon a more neceſſary occaſion. "I know, ſays Charles XII. by your wounds and by my own, that we have fought valiantly together. You have hitherto done your duty, do it to-day likewiſe." Nothing now remained but to pay an implicit obedience

obedience to the king's command. Every one was aſhamed not to court death with their ſovereign. Charles, being now prepared for the aſſault, enjoyed in ſecret the pleaſing thoughts, that he ſhould have the honour of ſuſtaining with three hundred Swedes the united efforts of a whole army. He aſſigned to every man his poſt. His chancellor, Mullern, and the ſecretary, Empreus, and his clerks, were to defend the chancery-houſe; Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was ſtationed in another poſt. A third place was to be guarded by the grooms of the ſtable, and the cooks; for with him every one was a ſoldier. He rode from the intrenchments to his houſe, promiſing rewards to every one, creating officers, and aſſuring them, that he would exalt the very meaneſt of his ſervants, who ſhould fight with courage and reſolution, to the dignity of captains.

It was not long before they beheld the combined army of the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack this little camp with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The horſes tails waved in the air; the clarions ſounded; the cries of "Alla, Alla," were heard on all ſides. Baron Grothuſen obſerving that the Turks did not mix in their cries any injurious reflections on the king, but only called him "Demirbaſh, i. e. Head of Iron, he inſtantly reſolved to go out of the camp alone and unarmed; and having accordingly advanced to the lines of the janiſſaries, moſt of whom had received money from him: "What then, my friends, ſays he to them, in their own language, are you come to maſſacre three hundred defenceleſs Swedes? you brave janiſſaries, who pardoned an hundred thouſand Ruſſians upon their crying "Ammam," i. e. pardon, have you forgot the many favours you have received from us? and would you aſſaſſinate that great king of Sweden for whom you have ſo great a regard, and from whom you have received ſo many preſents? All he aſks, my friends, is but the ſpace of three days; and the ſultan's orders are not ſo ſtrict as you are made to believe.

Theſe words produced an effect which Grothuſen himſelf could little have expected. The janiſſaries ſwore by their beards that they would not attack the king, but would grant him the three days he demanded. In vain was the ſignal given for the aſſault. The janiſſaries were ſo far from obeying, that they threatened to fall upon their leaders, unleſs they would conſent to grant three days to the king of Sweden. They came to the baſha of Bender's tent, crying out that the ſultan's orders were fictitious. To this unexpected ſedition the baſha had nothing to oppoſe but patience.

He affected to be pleaſed with the generous reſolution of the janiſſaries, and ordered them to return to Bender. The kam of Tartary, a man of headſtrong and impetuous paſſions, would have given the aſſault immediately with his own troops: but the baſha, unwilling that the Tartars ſhould have all the honour of taking the king, while himſelf perhaps might be puniſhed for the diſobedience of the janiſſaries, perſuaded the kam to wait till the next day.

On his return to Bender, the baſha aſſembled all the officers of the janiſſaries, and the oldeſt ſoldiers, to whom he both read and ſhewed the ſultan's poſitive orders, and the mufti's fetſa. Sixty of the oldeſt of them, with venerable grey beards, who had received a thouſand preſents from the king's hands, propoſed to go to him in perſon, to intreat him to put himſelf into their hands, and to permit them to ſerve him as guards.

The baſha agreed to the propoſal, as indeed there was no expedient he would not willingly have tried, rather than be reduced to the neceſſity of killing the king. Accordingly theſe ſixty veterans repaired next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white rods, the only arms which the janiſſaries wear, unleſs when they are going to fight; for the Turks conſider the Chriſtian cuſtom of carrying ſwords in time of peace, and of entering armed into churches and the houſes of their friends, as a barbarous practice.

They

They addreſſed themſelves to baron Grothuſen, and chancellor Mullern. They told them that they were come with a view to ſerve as faithful guards to the king; and that if he pleaſed they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might have a perſonal interview with the grand ſeignior. While they were making this propoſal, the king read the letters which were brought from Conſtantinople, and which Fabricius, who could no longer attend him in perſon, had ſent him privately by a janiſſary. Theſe letters were from count Poniatowſky, who could neither ſerve him at Bender nor Adrianople, having been detained at Conſtantinople by order of the Porte, ever ſince the time of his making the imprudent demand of a thouſand purſes. He told the king that the ſultan's orders to ſeize or maſſacre his royal perſon in caſe of reſiſtance, were but too true; that indeed the ſultan was impoſed upon by his miniſters; but the more he was impoſed upon, he would, for that very reaſon, be the more faithfully obeyed: that he muſt ſubmit to the times, and yield to neceſſity: that he took the liberty to adviſe him to try every expedient with the miniſters by way of negociations; not to be inflexible in a matter which required the gentleſt management; and to expect from time and good policy a cure of that evil, which by raſh and violent meaſures would be only rendered incurable.

But neither the propoſal of the old janiſſaries, nor Poniatowſky's letters could convince the king that it was conſiſtent with his honour to yield. He rather choſe to periſh by the hands of the Turks, than in any reſpect to be made a priſoner. He diſmiſſed the janiſſaries without condeſcending to ſee them, and ſent them word, that, if they did not immediately depart, he would ſhave their beards for them: an affront, which, in the eaſtern countries, is conſidered as the moſt intolerable of all others.

The old men, filled with the higheſt indignation, returned home, crying out as they went, "Ah this head of iron! ſince he will periſh, let him periſh." They gave the baſha an account of their commiſſion, and informed their comrades at Bender of the ſtrange recep-

tion they had met with; upon which they all ſwore to obey the baſha's orders without delay, and were as impatient to go to the aſſault as they had been averſe to it the day before.

The word of command was immediately given. The Turks marched up to the fortifications: the Tartars were already waiting for them, and the cannon began to play. The janiſſaries, on the one ſide, and the Tartars on the other, inſtantly forced the little camp. Hardly had twenty Swedes time to draw their ſwords when the whole three hundred were ſurrounded and taken priſoners without reſiſtance. The king was then on horſeback, between his houſe and his camp, with the generals Hord, Dardoff, and Sparre; and ſeeing that all his ſoldiers had ſuffered themſelves to be taken priſoners before his eyes, he ſaid, with great compoſure, to theſe three officers, "Come, let us go and defend the houſe; we will fight, adds he, with a ſmile, *pro aris & focis.*"

Accordingly, accompanied by theſe three generals, he forthwith gallops up to the houſe, in which he had placed about forty domeſtics as centinels, and which he had fortified in the beſt manner he could.

The generals, accuſtomed as they were, to the dauntleſs intrepidity of their maſter, could not help being ſurpriſed to ſee him reſolve in cold blood, and even with an air of pleaſantry, to defend himſelf againſt ten pieces of cannon, and a whole army: nevertheleſs they followed him, with ſome guards and domeſtics, making in all about twenty perſons.

When they came to the door, they found it beſet by the janiſſaries. Beſides, two hundred Turks and Tartars had already entered by a window, and made themſelves maſters of all the apartments, except a large hall where the king's domeſtics had retired. Happily this hall was near the door at which the king deſigned to enter with his little troop of twenty perſons. He threw himſelf off his horſe with piſtol and ſword in hand, and his followers did the ſame.

The janiſſaries fell upon him on all ſides. They were animated with the promiſe which the baſha had made,

made, of eight ducats of gold to every man who ſhould only touch his cloaths, in caſe they could take him. He wounded and killed all thoſe who came near him. A janiſſary whom he wounded clapped his blunderbuſs to his face, and had he not been joſtled by the arm of a Turk, owing to the crowd that moved backwards and forwards like waves, the king had certainly been killed. The ball grazed upon his noſe, and carried off part of his ear, and then broke the arm of general Hord, whoſe conſtant fate it was to be wounded by his maſter's ſide.

The king plunged his ſword in the janiſſary's breaſt. At the ſame time, his domeſtics, who were ſhut up in the great hall, open the door to him. The king, with his little troop, ſprings in like an arrow. They inſtantly ſhut the door, and barricade it with whatever they can find. Thus was Charles XII. ſhut up in this hall with all his attendants, conſiſting of about ſixty men, officers, guards, ſecretaries, valets de chambre, and domeſtics of every kind.

The Janiſſaries and Tartars pillaged the reſt of the houſe, and filled the apartments. "Come, ſays the king, let us go and drive out theſe barbarians;" and putting himſelf at the head of his men, he, with his own hands, opens the door of the hall that leads to his bed-chamber, ruſhes into the room and fires upon the plunderers.

The Turks, loaded with ſpoil, and terrified at the ſudden appearance of the king, whom they had ever been accuſtomed to reſpect, throw down their arms, leap out of the window, or fly to the cellars. The king taking advantage of their confuſion, and his own men being animated by the ſucceſs of this attempt, they purſue the Turks from chamber to chamber; kill or wound thoſe who had not made their eſcape; and in a quarter of an hour clear the houſe of the enemy.

In the heat of the fight the king perceived two janiſſaries who lay concealed under his bed, one of them he ſtabbed with his ſword, the other aſked pardon, by crying, "Amman." "I give you your life, ſays the king to him, on this condition, that you go and give

the baſha a faithful account of what you have ſeen." The Turk readily promiſed to do as he was bid, and was allowed to leap out at the window like the reſt.

The Swedes, having at laſt made themſelves maſters of the houſe, again ſhut and barricadoed the windows. They were in no want of arms. A ground room full of muſkets and powder had eſcaped the tumultuary ſearch of the janiſſaries. Theſe they employed to good purpoſe. They fired through the windows almoſt cloſe upon the Turks, of whom, in leſs than half a quarter of an hour they killed two hundred. The cannon ſtill played upon the houſe; but the ſtones being very ſoft, there were only ſome holes made in the walls, and nothing was demoliſhed.

The kam of Tartary, and the baſha, were deſirous of taking the king alive, being aſhamed to loſe ſo many men, and to employ a whole army againſt ſixty perſons, thought it moſt adviſable to ſet fire to the houſe, in order to oblige the king to ſurrender. They ordered ſome arrows twiſted about with lighted matches, to be ſhot upon the roof, and againſt the doors and windows. In a moment the houſe was in flames. The roof all on fire was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king, with great calmneſs, gave orders to extinguiſh the fire. Finding a ſmall barrel full of liquor, he took it up, and being aſſiſted by two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was moſt violent. At laſt he recollected that the barrel was full of brandy; but the hurry, inſeparable from ſuch a ſcene of confuſion, hindered him from thinking of it in time. The fire now raged with double fury. The king's apartment was reduced to aſhes. The great hall where the Swedes were was filled with a terrible ſmoke, mixed with ſheets of flame, that darted in at the doors of the neighbouring apartments. One half of the roof ſunk within the houſe, the other fell on the outſide, cracking amidſt the flames.

In this extremity, a centinel called Walberg, ventured to cry, that there was a neceſſity for ſurrendering. "What a ſtrange man is this, ſays the king, to imagine, that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken priſoner!"

priſoner!" Another centinel, named Roſen, had the preſence of mind to obſerve, that the chancery-houſe, which was not above fifty paces diſtant, had a ſtone roof, and was proof againſt fire; that they ought to ſally forth, take poſſeſſion of that houſe, and then defend themſelves to the laſt extremity. "There is a true Swede for you," cries the king, and embracing the centinel, he made him a colonel upon the ſpot. "Come on, my friends, ſays he, take as much powder and ball with you as you can, and let us take poſſeſſion of the chancery, ſword in hand."

The Turks, who all the while ſurrounded the houſe, were ſtruck with fear and admiration, to ſee the Swedes continue in it, notwithſtanding it was all in flames; but their aſtoniſhment was greatly increaſed when they ſaw the doors opened, and the king and his followers ruſhing out upon them like ſo many madmen. Charles and his principal officers were armed with ſword and piſtol. Every man fired two piſtols at once, the moment the doors were opened; and in the twinkling of an eye, throwing away their piſtols, and drawing their ſwords, they made the Turks recoil above fifty paces. But in a moment after, this little troop was ſurrounded. The king, who was booted, as uſual, entangled himſelf with his ſpurs, and fell. One and twenty janiſſaries at once ſpring upon him. He throws up his ſword into the air, to ſave himſelf the mortification of ſurrendering it. The Turks bear him to the baſha's quarters, ſome taking hold of his arms, and others of his legs, in the ſame manner as ſick perſons are wont to be carried, in order to prevent their being hurt.

No ſooner did the king ſee himſelf in their hands, than the violence of his temper, and the fury which ſuch a long and deſperate fight muſt have naturally inſpired, gave place at once to a mild and gentle behaviour: not one word of impatience dropped from his lips; not one angry look was to be ſeen in his face. He eyed the Janiſſaries with a ſmiling countenance, and they carried him off crying "Alla," with a mixture of reſpect

reſpect and indignation. His officers were taken at the ſame time and ſtripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the twelfth of February 1713, that this ſtrange event happened; an event that was followed with very remarkable conſequences*,

* M. Norberg, who was not preſent at this adventure, hath in this particular part of his hiſtory, only copied the account of M. de Voltaire; but he has mangled it: he hath ſuppreſſed ſome intereſting circumſtances, and has not been able to juſtify the temerity of Charles XII. All that he hath been able to advance againſt M. de Voltaire with regard to the affair of Bender, is reducible to the adventure of the ſieur Fredericus, valet de chambre to the king of Sweden, who, according to ſome, was burnt in the king's houſe, and, according to others, was cut in two by the Tartars. La Motraye alledges likewiſe, that the king of Sweden did not uſe theſe words, "We will fight *pro aris & focis*." But M. Fabricius, who was preſent, affirms, that the king did pronounce theſe words; that La Motraye was not near enough to hear them; and that, if he had, he was not capable of comprehending their meaning, as he did not underſtand a word of Latin.

THE

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK VII.

THE CONTENTS.

The TURKS convey CHARLES to DEMIRTASH. King STANISLAUS is taken at the ſame time. Bold Undertaking of M. de VILLELONGUE. Revolutions in the Seraglio. Battle in POMERANIA. ALTENA burnt by the Swedes, CHARLES at laſt ſets out on his return to his own Dominions. His ſtrange manner of travelling: His arrival at STRALSUND: His Misfortunes. Succeſſes of PETER the GREAT: His triumphant Entry into PETERSBURG.

THE baſha of Bender, with great gravity, waited for Charles in his tent, attended by one Marco, an interpreter. He received his majeſty in a moſt reſpectful manner, and entreated him to repoſe himſelf on a ſopha; but the king, who did not ſo much as take notice of the Turk's civilities, continued ſtanding.

" Bleſſed

"Bleſſed be the Almighty (ſays the baſha) that your majeſty is alive: I am extremely ſorry that your majeſty obliged me to execute the orders of his highneſs." The king, who was only vexed that his three hundred ſoldiers ſhould have ſuffered themſelves to be taken in their entrenchments, ſaid to the baſha; "Ah! had they defended themſelves as they ought, you would not have been able to force our camp in ten days." "Alas! (ſays the Turk) that ſo much courage ſhould be ſo ill employed!" He ordered the king to be conducted back to Bender on a horſe richly capariſoned. All the Swedes were either killed or taken priſoners. All his equipage, his goods, his papers, and moſt neceſſary utenſils, were either plundered or burnt. One might have ſeen in the public roads the Swediſh officers, almoſt naked, and chained together in pairs, following the Tartars or janiſſaries on foot. The chancellor and the general officers did not meet with a milder fate; they were the ſlaves of the ſoldiers to whoſe ſhare they had fallen.

Iſmael Baſha having conducted Charles to his ſeraglio at Bender, gave him his own apartment, and ordered him to be ſerved like a king; but not without taking the precaution to plant a guard of janiſſaries at the chamber door. A bed was prepared for him; but he threw himſelf down upon a ſopha, booted as he was, and fell faſt ſleep. An officer, that ſtood near him in waiting, covered his head with a cap; but the king, upon awaking from his firſt ſleep, threw it off; and the Turk was ſurpriſed, to ſee a ſovereign prince ſleeping in his boots and bare-headed. Next morning, Iſmael introduced Fabricius into the king's chamber. Fabricius found his majeſty with his cloaths torn; his boots, his hands, and his whole body, covered with duſt and blood, and his eye-brows burnt; but ſtill maintaining, in this terrible condition, a placid and cheerful look. He fell upon his knees before him, without being able to utter a word; but ſoon recovering from his ſurprize, by the free and eaſy manner in which the king addreſſed him, he reſumed his wonted familiarity with him, and they began to talk of the battle of Bender with great humour

humour and pleaſantry. "It is reported (ſays Fabricius that your majeſty killed twenty janiſſaries with your own hand." "Well, well, (replies the king) a ſtory, you know, never loſes in the telling." During this converſation, the baſha preſented to the king his favourite Grothuſen, and colonel Ribbins, whom he had had the generoſity to redeem at his own expence. Fabricius undertook to ranſom the other priſoners.

Jeffreys, the Engliſh envoy, joined his endeavours with thoſe of Fabricius, in order to procure the money neceſſary for this purpoſe. A Frenchman, who had come to Bender out of mere curioſity, and who hath wrote a ſhort account of theſe tranſactions, gave all that he had; and theſe ſtrangers, aſſiſted by the intereſt, and even by the money, of the baſha, redeemed not only the officers, but likewiſe their cloaths, from the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

Next day, the king was conducted as a priſoner, in a chariot covered with ſcarlet, towards Adrianople. His treaſurer Grothuſen was with him. Chancellor Mullern and ſome officers followed in another carriage. Several were on horſeback; and when they caſt their eyes on the king's chariot, they could not refrain from tears. The baſha was at the head of the convoy: Fabricius told him, that it was a ſhame the king ſhould want a ſword, and begged he would give him one. "God forbid, (ſays the baſha) he would cut our beards for us, if he had a ſword." However, he gave him one a few hours after.

While they were conducting this king, diſarmed and a priſoner, who, but a few years before, had given law to ſo many ſtates, and had ſeen himſelf the arbiter of the north, and the terror of Europe, there appeared in the ſame place another inſtance of the frailty of human greatneſs.

King Staniſlaus had been ſeized in the Turkiſh dominions, and they were now carrying him a priſoner to Bender, at the very time that they were removing Charles from it.

Staniſlaus,

Staniſlaus, being no longer ſupported by the hand which had raiſed him to the throne, and finding himſelf deſtitute of money, and conſequently of intereſt in Poland, had retired at firſt into Pomerania; and unable to preſerve his own kingdom, he had done all that lay in his power to defend that of his benefactor: he had even gone to Sweden, in order to haſten the reinforcements that were ſo much wanted in Livonia and Pomerania. In a word, he had done every thing that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII. About this time, the firſt king of Pruſſia, a prince of great prudence, being juſtly apprehenſive of danger from the too near neighbourhood of the Muſcovites, thought proper to enter into a league with Auguſtus and the republic of Poland, in order to ſend back the Ruſſians to their own country, and he hoped to engage the king of Sweden himſelf in this project. From this plan, three great events were expected to reſult; the peace of the North, the return of Charles to his own kingdom, and the eſtabliſhment of a ſtrong barrier againſt the Ruſſians, whoſe power was already become formidable to Europe. The preliminary article of this treaty, upon which the public tranquillity depended, was the abdication of Staniſlaus; who not only accepted the propoſal, but even undertook to uſe his endeavours in bringing about a peace which deprived him of his crown. To this ſtep he was prompted by neceſſity, the public good, the glory of the ſacrifice, and the intereſt of Charles XII. He wrote to Bender. He explained to the king of Sweden the deſperate ſituation of his affairs, and the only effectual remedy that could be applied. He conjured him not to oppoſe an abdication which was rendered neceſſary by the ſtrange conjunctures of the times, and honourable by the noble motive from which it proceeded. He entreated him not to ſacrifice the intereſts of Sweden to thoſe of an unhappy friend, who cheerfully preferred the public good to his own private happineſs. Charles XII. received theſe letters at Varnitza. He ſaid to the courier in a paſſion, in preſence of ſeveral witneſſes; "If

"my

my friend will not be a king, I can eaſily find another that will."

Staniſlaus was obſtinately bent on making the ſacrifice which Charles oppoſed. Theſe times ſeem to have been deſtined by providence to produce ſtrange ſentiments, and ſtill ſtranger actions. Staniſlaus reſolved to go himſelf, and endeavour to prevail upon Charles; and thus he ran a greater riſk in abdicating the throne, than ever he had done in obtaining it. One evening about ſix o'clock, he ſtole from the Swediſh army, which he commanded in Pomerania, and ſet out, in company with baron Sparre and another colonel, the former of whom hath ſince been an ambaſſador in France and England. He aſſumed the name of a French gentleman, called Haran, who was then a major in the Swediſh army, and lately died commander of Dantzick. He paſſed cloſe by the whole army of the enemy; was ſometimes ſtopped, and as often releaſed by virtue of a paſſport which he got in the name of Haran. At length, after many perils and dangers, he arrived on the frontiers of Turky.

As ſoon as he had reached Moldavia, he ſent back baron Sparre to the army, and entered Yaſſy, the capi- of Moldavia, thinking himſelf perfectly ſecure in a country where the king of Sweden had been treated with ſo much reſpect, and never entertaining the leaſt ſuſpicion of what had happened.

The Moldavians aſked him who he was? He ſaid he was major of a regiment in the ſervice of Charles XII. At the bare mention of that name he was ſeized, and carried before the hoſpadar of Moldavia, who, having already learned from the Gazettes that Staniſlaus had privately withdrawn from his army, began to ſuſpect that this was probably the man. He had heard the king's figure deſcribed ſo exactly, that it was very eaſy to diſcover the reſemblance; an open and engaging countenance, and a very uncommon air of ſweetneſs.

The hoſpadar examined him, put to him a great many captious queſtions, and at laſt aſked him what commiſſion he bore in the Swediſh army. Their converſation

verſation was carried on in Latin. *Major ſum*, ſays Staniſlaus. *Imo maximus es*, replies the Moldavian; and immediately preſenting him with a chair of ſtate, he treated him like a king; but ſtill like a king who was a priſoner, placing a ſtrict guard about a Greek convent, in which he was obliged to remain, till ſuch time as the ſultan's orders ſhould arrive. At length theſe orders came, importing, that Staniſlaus ſhould be carried to Bender, from which Charles XII. had been juſt removed.

The news of this event was brought to the baſha, at the time he was accompanying the king of Sweden's chariot. The baſha communicated the particulars to Fabricius, who, coming up to Charles's chariot, told him he was not the only king that was a priſoner in the hands of the Turks; and that Staniſlaus was but a few miles off, under a guard of ſoldiers. "Run to him, my dear Fabricius, (ſays Charles, without being in the leaſt diſconcerted) tell him never to make a peace with Auguſtus, and aſſure him, that our affairs will ſoon take another turn." So much was Charles wedded to his own opinions, that, abandoned as he was in Poland, attacked in his own dominions, a captive in a Turkiſh litter, and led a priſoner without knowing whither they were carrying, he ſtill reckoned on the favour of fortune, and hoped the Ottoman Porte would aſſiſt him with an hundred thouſand men. Fabricius haſtened to execute his commiſſion, attended by a janiſſary, having firſt obtained leave from the baſha. At a few miles diſtance he met the body of ſoldiers that conducted Staniſlaus. He addreſſed himſelf to a perſon that rode in the midſt of them, clad in a French dreſs, and but indifferently mounted; and aſked him in the German tongue, where the king of Poland was. The perſon to whom he ſpoke happened to be Staniſlaus himſelf, whoſe features he could not recollect under this diſguiſe. "What! (ſays the king) don't you know me?" Fabricius then informed him of the wretched condition in which the king of Sweden was; but added, that his reſolutions, however unſucceſsful, were as determined as ever.

As

As Staniſlaus was drawing near to Bender, the baſha, who had returned thither after having accompanied Charles for ſome miles, ſent the king of Poland an Arabian horſe, with a magnificent harneſs.

He was received at Bender amidſt a diſcharge of the artillery; and, excepting his confinement, from which he was not as yet delivered, he had no great cauſe to complain of his treatment *. Mean while Charles was on his way to Adrianople. Nothing was talked of in that town but his late battle. The Turks at once condemned and admired him; but the divan was ſo provoked, that they threatened to confine him in one of the iſlands of the Archipelago.

Staniſlaus, king of Poland, from whom I had the honour to receive the greateſt part of theſe particulars, aſſured me likewiſe, that a propoſal was made in the divan for confining him in one of the iſlands of Greece; but the grand ſeignior being mollified, a few months after allowed him to depart.

M. Deſaleurs, who could have taken his part, and could have prevented the Turks from offering ſuch an affront to all Chriſtian kings, was at Conſtantinople; as was likewiſe M. Poniatowſky, whoſe ſertile and enterpriſing genius the divan had always dreaded. Moſt of the Swedes at Adrianople were in priſon; and the ſultan's throne ſeemed to be inacceſſible to any complaints of the king of Sweden.

The marquis de Fierville, who had reſided with Charles at Bender as a private agent of France, was then at Adrianople. He undertook to do that prince a piece of ſervice, at a time when he was abandoned or oppreſſed by all the world beſides. In this deſign he was happily aſſiſted by a French gentleman, of an ancient family in Champagne, called Villelongue, a man

* The good chaplain, Norberg, alledges that we are here guilty of a manifeſt contradiction, in ſuppoſing, that king Staniſlaus was at once detained a priſoner, and treated as a king, at Bender. What! had not the poor man diſcernment enough to perceive that it is very poſſible for a perſon, at one and the ſame time, to be loaded with honour and deprived of his liberty?

man of great courage, but who, not having a fortune equal to his ſpirit and charmed with the fame of the king of Sweden, had repaired to Turky with a view of entering into the ſervice of that prince.

With the aſſiſtance of this young man, M. de Fierville wrote a memorial in the king of Sweden's name, in which he made his majeſty demand ſatisfaction of the ſultan for the inſult, which, in his perſon, had been offered to all crowned heads, and for the treachery, real or ſuppoſed, of the kam and baſha of Bender.

In this memorial he accuſed the vizier and other miniſters of having received bribes from the Ruſſians, impoſed upon the grand ſeignior, intercepted the king's letters to his highneſs, and of having, by their artifices, extorted from the ſultan an order ſo contrary to the hoſpitality of Muſſulmans, by which, in direct violation of the laws of nations, and in a manner ſo unworthy of a great emperor, they had attacked, with twenty thouſand men, a king who had none but his domeſtics to defend him, and who relied upon the ſacred word of the ſultan.

When this memorial was drawn up, it was to be tranſlated into the Turkiſh language, and written in a particular hand, and upon a certain kind of paper, which is always uſed in addreſſes to the ſultan.

For this purpoſe they applied to ſeveral French interpreters in the town; but the affairs of the king of Sweden were in ſuch a deſperate ſituation, and the vizier was ſo much his declared enemy, that not a ſingle interpreter would undertake the taſk. At laſt they found a ſtranger, whoſe hand was not known at the Porte, who, having received a handſome gratuity, and being fully aſſured of the moſt profound ſecrecy, tranſlated the memorial into the Turkiſh tongue, and wrote it upon the right kind of paper. Baron d'Arvidſon, a Swediſh officer counterfeited the king's ſubſcription. Fierville, who had the royal ſignet, appended it to the writing; and the whole was ſealed with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue undertook to deliver it into the hands of the grand ſeignior, as he went to the moſque, according

according to his uſual cuſtom. The like methods had been frequently employed for preſenting memorials to the ſultan againſt his miniſters; but that very circumſtance rendered the ſucceſs of this enterprize the more precarious, and the danger of the attempt the more imminent.

The vizier, who plainly foreſaw that the Swedes would demand juſtice of the ſultan, and who, from the unhappy fate of his predeceſſors, had but too many warnings to provide for his own ſafety, had given peremptory orders to allow no one to approach the grand ſeignior's perſon, but to ſeize all ſuch as ſhould be about the moſque with petitions in their hands.

Villelongue was well apprized of this order, and, at the ſame time, knew, that, by breaking it, he run the riſk of loſing his head. He therefore laid aſide his Frank's dreſs, and put on a Grecian habit; and concealing the letter in his boſom, repaired betimes to the neighbourhood of the moſque to which the grand ſeignior reſorted. He counterfeited the madman, and dancing between two files of janiſſaries, through which the ſultan was to paſs, he purpoſely let ſome pieces of money drop from his pockets, as if by chance, in order to amuſe the guards.

When the ſultan was drawing near, the guards endeavoured to remove Villelongue out of the way; but he fell on his knees and ſtruggled with the janiſſaries. At laſt his cap fell off, and he was diſcovered by his long hair to be a Frank. He received ſeveral blows, and was very roughly handled. The grand ſeignior, who was at no great diſtance, heard the ſcuffle, and aſked the cauſe of it. Villelongue cried out with all his might, *Amman! Amman!* Mercy! pulling the letter at the ſame time out of his boſom. The ſultan ordered the guards to let him approach. Villelongue inſtantly runs up to him, embraces his ſtirrup, and preſents the memorial, ſaying, *Sued crall dan*, "The king of Sweden gives it thee." The ſultan put the letter in his boſom, and proceeded to the moſque. Mean time Villelongue was ſecured, and impriſoned in one of the exterior apartments of the ſeraglio.

The

The ſultan having read the letter upon his leaving the moſque, reſolved to examine the priſoner himſelf. This perhaps will appear ſomewhat incredible; nothing, however, is here advanced, but what is vouched by the letters of M. de Villelongue; and ſurely, when ſo brave an officer affirms any thing upon his honour, he merits, at leaſt, ſome credit. He aſſured me then that the ſultan laid aſide his imperial garb and turban, and diſguiſed himſelf like an officer of the janiſſaries, a thing which he frequently does. He brought along with him an old man of the iſland of Malta, as an interpreter. By favour of this diſguiſe, Villelongue enjoyed an honour which no Chriſtian ambaſſador ever obtained. He had a private conference with the Turkiſh emperor for a quarter of an hour. He did not fail to repreſent the wrongs which the king of Sweden had ſuffered, to accuſe the miniſters, and to demand ſatisfaction; and all this with ſo much the more freedom, as in talking to the ſultan he was only ſuppoſed to be talking to his equal. He could eaſily diſcover, notwithſtanding the darkneſs of the priſon, that it was no other than the grand ſeignior himſelf; but this diſcovery only made him ſpeak with the greater boldneſs. The pretended officer of the janiſſaries ſaid to Villelongue; "Chriſtian, be aſſured, that the ſultan, my maſter, has the ſoul of an emperor; and that your king of Sweden, if he has reaſon on his ſide, ſhall obtain juſtice." Villelongue was ſoon ſet at liberty; and in a few weeks after, a ſudden change took place in the ſeraglio, owing, as the Swedes affirm, to this conference alone. The mufti was depoſed; the kam of Tartary was baniſhed to Rhodes; and the ſeraſquier baſha of Bender was confined in one of the iſlands of the Archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is ſo ſubject to theſe revolutions, that it is hard to ſay, whether the ſultan really meant to gratify the king of Sweden by theſe ſacrifices. From the treatment which that prince received, it cannot ſurely be inferred that the Porte had any great inclination to oblige him.

The

The favourite, Ali Coumorgi, was ſuſpected of having brought about all theſe changes, in order to ſerve his own particular views. The kam of Tartary and the ſeraſquier of Bender were ſaid to have been baniſhed for giving the king the twelve hundred purſes, in contradiction to the expreſs orders of the grand ſeignior. Coumourgi raiſed to the throne of Tartary the brother of the depoſed kam, a young man of his own age, who had little regard for his brother, and upon whom the favourite depended greatly in proſecuting the wars he had already planned. With reſpect to the grand vizier Juſſuff, he was not depoſed till ſome weeks after; and the title of prime vizier was beſtowed on Soliman baſha.

Truth obliges me to declare, that M. de Villelongue and ſeveral Swedes aſſured me, that all theſe great revolutions at the Porte were entirely owing to the letter which was preſented to the ſultan in the king's name; whereas M. de Fierville is of a quite contrary opinion. I have ſometimes found the like contradictions in ſuch memorials as have been ſubmitted to my peruſal. In all theſe caſes, it is the duty of an hiſtorian honeſtly to narrate the plain matter of fact, without endeavouring to dive into the motives; and to confine himſelf to the relation of what he does know, inſtead of indulging his fancy in vague conjectures, about what he does not know.

Mean while Charles XII. was conducted to the little caſtle of Demirtaſh, in the neighbourhood of Adrianople. An innumerable multitude of people had crowded to this place to ſee the arrival of his majeſty, who was carried from his chariot to the caſtle on a ſopha; but Charles, in order to conceal himſelf from the view of the populace, put a cuſhion upon his head.

The Porte was ſtrongly ſolicited to allow him to reſide at Demotica, a little town ſix leagues from Adrianople, and near the famous river Hebrus, now called Merizza; but it was not till after ſeveral days that they granted his requeſt. "Go, (ſays Coumourgi to the grand vizier Soliman) and tell the king of Sweden, that he may ſtay at Demotica all his life long, if he pleaſes; but I will anſwer for him, that, in leſs than a year, he will

will want to be gone of his own accord; take care, however, not to give him any money."

Thus was the king conveyed to the little town of Demotica, where the Porte allotted him a conſiderable quantity of proviſions for himſelf and his retinue. But all the money they would grant him was five and twenty crowns a-day, to buy pork and wine, two kinds of proviſions which the Turks never furniſh to others. The allowance of five hundred crowns a-day, which he had enjoyed at Bender, was entirely withdrawn.

Hardly had he reached Demotica with his little court, when the grand vizier Soliman was depoſed; and his place filled by Ibrahim Molla, a man of a high ſpirit, of great courage, and unpoliſhed manners. It may not be amiſs to give a ſhort ſketch of his hiſtory, that ſo the reader may be the better acquainted with the characters of all thoſe viceroys of the Ottoman empire upon whom the fortune of Charles ſo long depended.

He had been a common ſailor till the the acceſſion of the ſultan Achmet III. This emperor frequently diſguiſed himſelf in the habit of a private man, of a prieſt, or a derviſe; and ſlipped in the evening into the coffee-houſes and other public places of Conſtantinople, to hear what the people ſaid of him, and what were their opinions concerning the affairs of ſtate. One day he overheard this Molla complaining that the Turkiſh ſhips never took any prizes, and ſwearing that if he were captain of a ſhip, he would never enter the port of Conſtantinople without bringing ſome veſſel of the infidels along with him. Next day the grand ſeignior gave him the command of a ſhip, and ſent him on a cruize. The new captain returned in a few days, with a Malteſe bark and a galley of Genoa. In two years time he was appointed captain-general of the navy, and at laſt grand vizier. As ſoon as he had attained his new poſt, he thought he could eaſily diſpenſe with the intereſt of the favourite. In order to render himſelf the more neceſſary, he formed a ſcheme for commencing a war againſt the Ruſſians; and with this view pitched a tent not far from the place where the king of Sweden reſided.

He

He invited his majeſty to come and ſee him, with the new kam of Tartary, and the French ambaſſador. The king, whoſe pride roſe with his misfortunes, conſidered it as a moſt intolerable affront for a ſubject to ſend him an invitation. He ordered his chancellor Mullern to go in his place; and, leſt the Turks ſhould not pay him that reſpect which was due to his royal perſon, or oblige him to condeſcend to any thing beneath his his dignity, Charles, who was ever in extremes, took to his bed, which he reſolved not to leave during his abode at Demotica. This reſolution he kept for ten months, under pretence of ſickneſs; chancellor Mullern, Grothuſen, and colonel Dubens, being the only perſons that were admitted to his table. They had none of the conveniencies with which the Franks are uſually provided: all theſe they had loſt at Bender; conſequently it could not be expected that their meals were ſerved with much pomp or elegance. In effect, they were obliged to ſerve themſelves; and, during the whole time, chancellor Mullern was cook in ordinary.

While Charles XII. was thus paſſing his time in bed, he received the diſagreeable news of the deſolation of of all his provinces, that lay without the limits of Sweden.

General Steinbock, who had rendered himſelf illuſtrious by chaſing the Danes out of Scania, and beating their beſt troops with a parcel of peaſants, ſtill maintained the glory of the Swediſh arms. He defended Pomerania, Bremen, and the king's poſſeſſions in Germany, as long as he was able; but could not hinder the combined army of the Danes and Saxons from beſieging Stade, a town of great ſtrength and importance, ſituated on the banks of the Elbe, in the Duchy of Bremen. The town was bombarded and reduced to aſhes; and the garriſon obliged to ſurrender at diſcretion, before Steinbock could come to their aſſiſtance.

This general, who had about twelve thouſand men, of whom the one half was cavalry, purſued the enemy, who were twice as numerous, and at laſt overtook them in the duchy of Mecklenburg, at a place called

Gadeſbuſh, near a river of the ſame name. It was on the 20th of December 1712, that he came in ſight of the Danes and Saxons. He was ſeparated from them by a moraſs. The enemy were ſo poſted as to have this moraſs in front, and a wood in their rear: they had the advantage of number and ſituation; and their camp was utterly inacceſſible, except acroſs the moraſs, which the Swedes could not paſs without being expoſed to the fire of the enemy's artillery.

Notwithſtanding theſe difficulties, Steinbock paſſed the moraſs at the head of his troops, advanced againſt the enemy in order of battle, and began one of the moſt deſperate and bloody engagements which ever happened between theſe rival nations. After a ſharp conflict for three hours, the Danes and Saxons were entirely routed, and obliged to quit the field of battle.

It was in this battle that a ſon of Auguſtus, by the counteſs of Koningſmark, known by the name of count Saxe, ſerved his apprenticeſhip in the art of war. This is the ſame count Saxe, who had afterwards the honour to be choſen duke of Courland, and who wanted nothing but power to put himſelf in poſſeſſion of the moſt inconteſtible right which any man can have to ſovereignty, I mean the unanimous conſent of the people. In fine, this is the man who hath ſince acquired a more ſolid glory by ſaving France at the battle of Fontenoy, conquering Flanders, and meriting the character of the greateſt general of the age. He commanded a regiment at Gadeſbuſh, and had a horſe killed under him. I have heard him ſay, that all the Swedes kept their ranks; and that, even after the victory was gained, and the firſt lines of theſe brave troops ſaw their enemies lying dead at their feet, there was not ſo much as a ſingle Swede that durſt ſtoop to ſtrip them, till prayers had been read in the field of battle; ſo inflexibly did they adhere to that ſtrict diſcipline which their king had taught them.

After the victory, Steinbock, remembering that the Danes had laid Stade in aſhes, reſolved to retaliate on Altena, a town belonging to the king of Denmark.

Altena

Altena ſtands below Hamburgh, on the banks of the Elbe, which can convey ſhips of conſiderable burden into its harbour. The king of Denmark had indulged this town with many privileges, hoping to make it, one day, a place of great trade; and indeed the induſtry of the inhabitants, encouraged by the prudent meaſures of the king, had already raiſed them to ſuch opulence, that Altena began to be reckoned in the number of rich and commercial cities. Hamburg grew jealous of this rival in trade, and earneſtly wiſhed for its deſtruction. When Steinbock came in ſight of Altena, he ſent a trumpet to acquaint the inhabitants that they might retire with as many of their effects as they could carry off, for that he meant to raze their town to the foundation.

The magiſtrates came and threw themſelves at his feet, and offered him an hundred thouſand crowns by way of ranſom. Steinbock demanded two hundred thouſand. The inhabitants begged that they might have time, at leaſt, to ſend to their correſpondents at Hamburgh, aſſuring him that next day the money ſhould be paid him; but the Swediſh general replied, that they muſt give it inſtantly, or he would immediately ſet Altena in flames.

His troops were already in the ſuburbs, with torches in their hands. The town had no other defence but a poor wooden gate, and a ditch already filled up. The wretched inhabitants were therefore obliged to leave their houſes at midnight, on the ninth of January 1713. The rigour of the ſeaſon, which was then exceſſive, was ſtill further increaſed by a ſtrong north wind, which ſerved at once to ſpread the flames through the town with greater violence, and to render the miſeries of the poor people, who were expoſed in the open fields, the more intolerable. Men and women, weeping and wailing, and bending under their heavy loads, fled to the neighbouring hills, which were covered with ſnow. The palſied old men were tranſported on the ſhoulders of the young. Some women, newly delivered, fled with their tender babes in their arms, and periſhed together on the naked rock, turning their languiſhing

guiſhing eyes towards their dear country, which was now wrapt in flames. The Swedes ſet fire to the town, before the inhabitants had entirely left it. The conflagration continued from midnight till ten in the morning. The houſes being moſtly of wood, were entirely conſumed; and next day there was not the leaſt veſtige of a town remaining.

The aged, the ſick, and women of tender conſtitutions, who had lodged on the ſnow while their houſes were in flames, at laſt made a ſhift to crawl to the gates of Hamburg, where they beſought the inhabitants to receive them within the walls, and thereby to ſave their lives. But this favour was denied them, becauſe ſome contagious diſtempers were known lately to have raged in Altena; and the Hamburgers had not ſo great a regard for the inhabitants, as to run the riſk of having their own town infected by admitting ſuch dangerous gueſts. Thus the greateſt part of theſe unhappy people expired under the walls of Hamburg, calling on heaven to witneſs the barbarity of the Swedes, and the ſtill greater inhumanity of the Hamburgers.

All Germany exclaimed againſt this outrage. The miniſters and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to count Steinbock, reproaching him with an act of cruelty, committed without neceſſity, and incapable of any excuſe, which could not fail to provoke heaven and earth againſt him.

Steinbock replied, that he never would have puſhed matters to ſuch extremities, had it not been with a view to teach the enemies of the king his maſter not to make war, for the future, like barbarians, but to pay ſome regard to the laws of nations; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, laid waſte that beautiful province, and ſold near an hundred thouſand of its inhabitants to the Turks; and that the torches which had laid Altena in aſhes were no more than juſt repriſals for the red-hot bullets which had deſtroyed Stade.

Such was the implacable reſentment with which the Swedes and their enemies carried on the war. Had Charles appeared in Pomerania at this time, he might poſſibly

poſſibly have retrieved his ruined fortune. His armies, though removed at ſo great a diſtance from his perſon, were ſtill animated by his ſpirit; but the abſence of a prince is always prejudicial to his affairs, and hinders his ſubjects from making the proper uſe of their victories. Steinbock loſt by piece-meal what he had gained by thoſe ſignal actions, which, at a happier juncture, would have been deciſive.

Victorious as he was, he could not prevent the junction of the Ruſſians, Danes, and Saxons. The combined army of theſe allies ſeized upon his quarters. He loſt ſome troops in ſeveral little ſkirmiſhes. Two thouſand of his men were drowned in paſſing the Eider, as they were going to their winter-quarters in Holſtein; and all theſe loſſes, in a country ſurrounded on every ſide by powerful enemies, were utterly irreparable.

He endeavoured to defend the duchy of Holſtein againſt the Danes; but, notwithſtanding all his prudent meaſures and vigorous efforts, the country was loſt, his whole army ruined, and himſelf taken priſoner.

Pomerania, all but Stralſand, the iſle of Rugen, and ſome neighbouring places, being left defenceleſs, became a prey to the allies, and was ſequeſtered in the hands of the king of Pruſſia. Bremen was filled with Daniſh garriſons. At the ſame time, the Ruſſians over-ran Finland and beat the Swedes, who, being now diſperſed and inferior in point of number, began to loſe that ſuperiority over their enemies, which they had poſſeſſed at the commencement of the war.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king reſolved to ſtay at Demotica, and ſtill flattered himſelf with the deluſive hopes of obtaining aſſiſtance from the Turks, in whom he ought no longer to have repoſed any confidence.

Ibrahim Molla, that bold vizier, who had been ſo obſtinately bent on a war with the Ruſſians, in oppoſition to the favourite, was ſtrangled in one of the paſſages of the ſeraglio.

The place of vizier was become ſo dangerous, that no one would venture to accept of it; and of conſequence it continued vacant for ſix months. At laſt

the favourite, Ali Coumourgi, aſſumed the title of grand vizier. This meaſure gave a fatal blow to all the hopes of the king of Sweden, who knew Coumourgi ſo much the better, that he had really been obliged to him for ſome friendly offices, when the intereſt of the favourite and that of his majeſty happened to coincide.

Charles had now been eleven months at Demotica, buried in ſloth and oblivion. This extreme indolence ſucceeding ſo ſuddenly to the moſt violent exerciſes, had at laſt given him the diſeaſe which he had formerly feigned. The report of his death was ſpread over all Europe. The council of regency, which he had eſtabliſhed at Stockholm when he left his capital, no longer received any diſpatches from him. The ſenate came in a body to the princeſs Ulrica Eleonora, the king's ſiſter, and entreated her to take the regency into her own hands, during her brother's abſence. She accepted the propoſal; but finding that the ſenate intended to force her to make a peace with the czar and the king of Denmark, and well knowing that her brother would never approve of ſuch a meaſure, ſhe reſigned the regency, and wrote a full and circumſtantial account of the whole matter to the king, in Turky.

Charles received his ſiſter's packet at Demotica. The arbitrary principles which he had ſucked in with his mother's milk, made him forget that Sweden had formerly been a free ſtate, and that, in ancient times, the management of public affairs was conducted by the king and ſenate, in conjunction. He conſidered that reſpectable body as no better than a parcel of menial ſervants, who wanted to uſurp the command of the houſe in their maſter's abſence. He wrote to them, that, if they pretended to aſſume the reins of government, he would ſend them one of his boots, from which he would oblige them to receive their orders.

To prevent, therefore, theſe attempts (as he thought them) upon his authority in Sweden, and to defend his kingdom now in the laſt extremity, deprived of all hopes of aſſiſtance from the Ottoman Porte, and relying on himſelf alone, he ſignified to the grand vizier his

deſire

deſire of departing, and returning by the way of Germany.

M. Deſaleurs, the French ambaſſador, who was charged with the affairs of Sweden, made the propoſal. "Well, (ſays the vizier to count Deſaleurs) did not I tell you, that, in leſs than a year, the king of Sweden would beg it as a favour, to be allowed to depart? Tell him he may either go or ſtay as he pleaſes; but let him come to a fixed reſolution, and appoint the day of his departure, that he may not again bring us into ſuch another ſcrape as that of Bender."

Count Deſaleurs ſoftened the harſhneſs of this anſwer, when he reported it to the king. The day was accordingly fixed. But, before he would quit Turky, Charles reſolved to diſplay the pomp of a great king, though involved in all the difficulties of a fugitive prince. He gave Grothuſen the title of his ambaſſador extraordinary, and ſent him with a retinue of eighty perſons, all richly dreſſed, to take his leave in form at the Porte.

The ſplendour of this embaſſy was only exceeded by the meanneſs of the ſhifts which the king was obliged to employ, in order to collect a ſum of money ſufficient to defray the expence of it.

M. Deſaleurs lent him forty thouſand crowns. Grothuſen had agents at Conſtantinople, who borrowed in his name, at the rate of fifty *per cent.* intereſt, a thouſand crowns of a Jew, two hundred piſtoles of an Engliſh merchant, and a thouſand livres of a Turk.

By theſe means they procured wherewithal to enable them to act the ſplendid farce of the Swediſh embaſſy before the divan. Grothuſen received, at the Porte, all the honours which are uſually paid to ambaſſadors extraordinary on the day of their audience. The deſign of all this parade was only to obtain money from the grand vizier; but that miniſter was inexorable.

Grothuſen made a propoſal for borrowing a million from the Porte. The vizier anſwered coldly, that his maſter knew how to give, when he thought proper; but that it was beneath his dignity to lend: that the king ſhould be ſupplied with plenty of every thing ne-

ceſſary for his journey, in a manner worthy of the perſon that ſent him back; and that the Porte, perhaps, might even make him a preſent in gold bullion, though he would not have him depend upon it for certain.

At laſt, on the firſt day of October 1714, the king of Sweden ſet out on his journey. A capigi baſha, with ſix chiaoux, came to attend him from the caſtle of Demirtaſh, where he had reſided for ſome days paſt. The baſha preſented him, in the name of the grand ſeignior, with a large tent of ſcarlet embroidered with gold, a ſabre whoſe handle was ſet with jewels, and eight beautiful Arabian horſes, with fine ſaddles, and ſtirrups of maſſy gold. It is not beneath the dignity of hiſtory to obſerve, that the Arabian groom, who took care of the horſes, gave the king an account of their genealogy; a cuſtom which hath long prevailed among theſe people, who ſeem to be more attentive to the nobility of horſes than of men; which, after all, perhaps, is not ſo unreaſonable, as theſe animals, if the breed is kept free from intermixture, are never known to degenerate.

The convoy conſiſted of ſixty loaded waggons, and three hundred horſe. The capigi baſha being informed that ſeveral Turks had lent money to the king of Sweden's attendants at an immoderate intereſt, told his majeſty that uſury was forbid by the Mahometan law; he therefore entreated him to liquidate all theſe debts, and to order his reſident at Conſtantinople to pay no more than the capital. "No, (ſays the king) if any of my ſervants have given bills for an hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they ſhould not even have received ten."

He made a propoſal to his creditors to follow him, aſſuring them, at the ſame time, that he would not only pay their debts, but likewiſe indemnify them for the expence of the journey. Several of them went to Sweden; and Grothuſen was commiſſioned to ſee them paid.

In order to ſhew the greater deference to their royal gueſt, the Turks made him travel by very ſhort ſtages; but this ſlow and reſpectful motion was ill-ſuited to the impatient ſpirit of the king. During the journey, he got

got up at three in the morning, according to his uſual cuſtom. As ſoon as he was dreſſed, he went himſelf and awakened the capigi and chiaoux, and began to march in the dark. The Turkiſh gravity was affronted with this new manner of travelling; but Charles took pleaſure in making them uneaſy, and ſaid, that he ſhould, at leaſt, be a little revenged on them, for their behaviour to him at Bender.

About the time that Charles reached the frontiers of Turky, Staniſlaus was leaving them, tho' by a different road, and going into Germany, with a view of retiring into the duchy of Deux-Ponts, a province bordering on the palatinate of Alſace and the Rhine, and which has belonged to the kings of Sweden ever ſince Charles X. the ſucceſſor of Chriſtina, united it to his crown. Charles aſſigned Staniſlaus the revenue of this duchy, which was then valued at about ſeventy thouſand crowns. Such was the final reſult of ſo many projects, wars, and expectations! Staniſlaus both could and would have concluded an advantageous treaty with Auguſtus, had not the inflexible obſtinacy of Charles made him loſe his lands and real eſtate in Poland, in order to preſerve the empty title of king.

This prince continued to reſide in the duchy of Deux-Ponts till the death of Charles XII. when that province returning to a prince of the Palatine family, he choſe to retire to Wiſſemburg, a place belonging to the French in Alſace. M. Sum, Auguſtus's envoy, entered a complaint on this head to the duke of Orleans, regent of France. The duke made him this remarkable anſwer: "Sir, let the king your maſter know, that France hath never refuſed an aſylum to kings in diſtreſs."

When the king of Sweden arrived on the frontiers of Germany, he had the pleaſure to hear, that the emperor had given ſtrict orders to receive him in every part of his dominions with a becoming magnificence. The towns and villages through which the quarter-maſters had previouſly fixed his route, made great preparations for receiving him; every one burned with impatience to ſee this extraordinary man, whoſe victories and misfortunes, whoſe moſt trifling actions, and even

his keeping his bed, had made ſo great a noiſe in Europe and Aſia. But Charles had no inclination to bear the fatigue of all this pomp and pageantry, or to exhibit as a public ſpectacle the priſoner of Bender. On the contrary, he had reſolved never to re-enter Stockholm, until he ſhould have repaired his loſſes by a change of fortune.

As ſoon as he arrived at Targowitz, on the confines of Tranſilvania, he took leave of his Turkiſh convoy; and, then aſſembling his attendants in a barn, he told them not to give themſelves any concern about him, but to proceed with all poſſible expedition to Stralſund in Pomerania, on the coaſt of the Baltick, diſtant from Targowitz about three hundred leagues.

He took nobody with him but two officers, Roſen and During, and parted cheerfully with the reſt of his attendants, who were filled with aſtoniſhment, ſorrow, and apprehenſion. By way of diſguiſe, he put on a black wig, concealing his own hair, which he always wore underneath it, a gold laced hat, a grey coat, and blue cloak, and, aſſuming the name of a German officer, rode poſt with his two fellow-travellers.

He ſhunned, as much as poſſible, the territories of his ſecret or declared enemies, taking the road through Hungary, Moravia, Auſtria, Bavaria, Wirtemberg, the Palatinate, Weſtphalia, and Mecklenburg; by which means he almoſt made the complete tour of Germany, and lengthened his journey by one half. Having rode the whole firſt day, without intermiſſion, young During, who was not ſo much inured to theſe exceſſive fatigues, fainted away as he was diſmounting. The king, who was determined not to halt a moment by the road, aſked During as ſoon as he had recovered, how much money he had? "About a thouſand crowns in gold," replies During. "Then give me one half of it, (ſays the king) I ſee you are not able to follow me, I ſhall finiſh the journey by myſelf." During begged he would be ſo good as to tarry but for three hours, aſſuring him, that, by that time, he ſhould be able to remount his horſe and attend his majeſty, and entreated him to reflect on the imminent dangers to which he would

would expoſe himſelf by travelling alone. The king was inexorable. He made him give him the five hundred crowns, and called for horſes. During, ſtartled at this reſolution, bethought himſelf of an innocent ſtratagem. He took the poſt-maſter aſide, and pointing to the king: "This gentleman (ſays he) is my couſin: we are going together upon the ſame buſineſs: he ſees that I am indiſpoſed, and yet he will not wait for me but for three hours: pray, give him the worſt horſe in your ſtable: and let me have a chariot, or poſt-chaiſe."

He ſlipt two ducats into the poſt-maſter's hand, who punctually obeyed his orders. The king had a lame and reſtive horſe, upon which he ſet out alone at ten at night, amidſt darkneſs, ſnow, wind, and rain. His fellow-traveller, after having ſlept a few hours, began to follow him in a chariot, with good horſes. He had not rode many miles, when, at day-break, he overtook the king, who, not being able to make his beaſt move on, was travelling on foot to the next ſtage.

Charles was obliged to get into During's chaiſe, where he ſlept upon the ſtraw. Thus they continued the journey without intermiſſion, by day on horſeback, and ſleeping by night in a chaiſe.

Having travelled for ſixteen days, during which they had more than once been in danger of being taken, they arrived at laſt, on the twenty-firſt of November, 1714, at the gates of Stralſund, about one in the morning.

The king called out to the centinel, and told him that he was a courier diſpatched from Turky by the king of Sweden, and that he muſt immediately ſpeak with general Ducker, the governor. The centinel ſaid that it was too late; that the governor was gone to bed; and that he muſt wait till break of day.

The king replied, that he came upon buſineſs of importance, and that, if they did not inſtantly go and awaken the governor, they ſhould all be puniſhed next morning. At laſt a ſerjeant went and called up the governor. Ducker imagined that it might poſſibly be

one

one of the king's generals: the gates were opened; and the courier introduced into the governor's chamber.

Ducker, who was ſtill half aſleep, aſked him; "What news of the king of Sweden?" The king, taking him by the arm, "What, (ſays he to Ducker) have my moſt faithful ſubjects forgot me?" The governor recollected the king, though he could not believe his own eyes; and jumping out of bed, embraced his maſter's knees with tears of joy. The news of this happy event were ſpread through the town in a moment. Every body got up. The ſoldiers flocked about the governor's houſe. The ſtreets were crowded with people, aſking each other, whether the king was really come. All the windows were illuminated, and the conduits ran with wine, amidſt the blaze of a thouſand flambeaux, and the repeated diſcharges of the artillery.

Mean while the king was put to bed, which was more than he had been for ſixteen days before. His legs were ſo much ſwollen with the great fatigue he had undergone, that, inſtead of pulling, they were obliged to cut off his boots. As he had neither linen nor cloaths, they immediately furniſhed him with ſuch a wardrobe as the town could afford. After he had ſlept a few hours, he roſe and went directly to review his troops, and viſit his fortifications. And that very day, he diſpatched orders into all parts, for renewing the war againſt his enemies with greater vigour than ever. All theſe particulars, which are ſo conſiſtent with the extraordinary character of Charles XII. were firſt communicated to me by M. Fabricius, and afterwards confirmed by count Croiſſy, ambaſſador to the king of Sweden.

Europe was now in a condition very different from that in which it was when Charles left it, in 1709.

The war which had ſo long raged in the South, that is, in Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, was now at an end. The general peace which ſucceeded was owing to ſome private intrigues in the court of England. The earl of Oxford, an able miniſter, and lord Bollingbroke, one of the greateſt

greateſt geniuſes, and one of the moſt eloquent orators of the age, had got the better of the duke of Marlborough, and prevailed upon the queen to make a peace with Lewis XIV. France being no longer at war with England, ſoon obliged the other powers to come to an accommodation.

Philip V. the grandſon of Lewis XIV. began to reign in peace over the ruins of the Spaniſh monarchy. The emperor of Germany, now become maſter of Naples and Flanders, was firmly eſtabliſhed in his vaſt dominions: and Lewis XIV. ſeemed to aim at nothing higher than to finiſh his long career of glory by a peaceable end.

Anne, queen of England, died on the 10th of Auguſt, 1714, hated by half the nation, for having given peace to ſo many kingdoms. Her brother, James Stuart, an unhappy prince, excluded from the throne almoſt at his birth, not being in England at that time to claim the ſucceſſion, which new laws would have conferred upon him, if his party could have prevailed; George I. elector of Hanover, was unanimouſly acknowledged king of Great Britain. The throne devolved to that elector not by right of blood, though deſcended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of parliament.

George, advanced in years when he was called to reign over a people, whoſe language he did not underſtand, and to whom he was an utter ſtranger, he conſidered himſelf rather as elector of Hanover than king of England. All his ambition was to aggrandize his German dominions. He commonly went once a year to viſit his hereditary ſubjects, by whom he was adored. In other reſpects, he took more pleaſure in living like a private man, than like a mighty ſovereign. The pomp of royalty appeared to him an inſupportable burden. He paſſed his time with a few old courtiers, with whom he lived in great familiarity. He was not the king that made the greateſt figure in Europe; but he was one of the wiſeſt princes of the age, and perhaps the only one that knew how to enjoy on a throne the pleaſures of friendſhip and private life. Such were the

the principal monarchs, and ſuch the ſituation of the ſouth of Europe.

The revolutions that happened in the North were of another nature. The kings in that part of the world were engaged in war, and leagued together againſt the king of Sweden.

Auguſtus had been long reſtored to the throne of Poland by the aſſiſtance of the czar, and with the joint conſent of the emperor of Germany, of Anne of England, and of the ſtates-general, who, though guarantees of the treaty of Altranſtad, when Charles XII. was able to impoſe laws, thought themſelves abſolved from that obligation, when they had nothing more to fear from him.

But Auguſtus did not enjoy an undiſturbed authority. No ſooner was he reſtored to the throne, than the people's apprehenſions of arbitrary power began to revive. The whole nation was in arms to oblige him to conform to the *pacta conventa*, a ſacred contract between the king and people, who ſeemed to have recalled their ſovereign for no other purpoſe than to declare war againſt him. In the beginning of theſe troubles, the name of Staniſlaus was not once mentioned: his party ſeemed to be annihilated; and the Poles retained no other remembrance of the king of Sweden than as of a torrent, which, in the violence of its courſe, had occaſioned a temporary change in the face of nature.

Pultowa, and the abſence of Charles XII. had occaſioned the fall not only of Staniſlaus, but alſo of the duke of Holſtein, Charles's nephew, who had lately been deſpoiled of his dominions by the king of Denmark. The king of Sweden had had a ſincere regard for the father, and, of conſequence, could not fail to be deeply affected with the misfortunes of the ſon; the rather, as, glory being the end of all his actions, the fall of thoſe princes, whom he had either made or reſtored, gave him as much pain as the loſs of his own provinces.

Every one was at liberty to enrich himſelf with the ruins of Charles's fortune. Frederic William, the new king of Pruſſia, who ſeemed to be as fond of war as his father had been of peace, was the firſt, who put in

in for his ſhare of the ſpoils. He ſeized Stetin and part of Pomerania, as an equivalent for four hundred thouſand crowns which he had advanced to the czar and the king of Denmark, George, elector of Hanover, now become king of England, had likewiſe ſequeſtered into his hands the duchy of Bremen and Verden, which the king of Denmark had aſſigned to him as a depoſit for ſixty thouſand piſtoles *. In this manner were divided the ſpoils of Charles XII. and whoever poſſeſſed any of his dominions as pledges, became, from their ſelfiſh and intereſted views, as dangerous enemies as thoſe, who had taken them from him.

With regard to the czar, he was doubtleſs the moſt formidable of all his enemies. His former loſſes, his victories, his very faults, his unremitted perſeverance in acquiring knowledge, and in communicating that knowledge to his ſubjects, and his inceſſant labours, had juſtly entitled him to the character of a great man. Riga was already taken; Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, and all the provinces that had been conquered by Charles's anceſtors, were now ſubjected to the Ruſſian yoke.

Peter Alexiowitz, who, twenty years before, had not a ſingle veſſel in the Baltic, now ſaw himſelf maſter of thoſe ſeas, with a fleet of thirty ſhips of the line.

One of theſe ſhips had been built by his own hands. He was the beſt carpenter, the beſt admiral, and the beſt pilot in the North. There was not a difficult paſſage from the gulph of Bothnia to the Ocean, which he had not ſounded. And, having thus joined the labours of a common ſailor to the curious experiments of a philoſopher, and the grand deſigns of an emperor, he arrived, by degrees and a courſe of victories, to the rank

* The Engliſh parliament afterwards granted a ſum of money to complete the purchaſe; and thus Bremen and Verden were ſecured to the houſe of Hanover. This acquiſition may be conſidered as the firſt link of that political chain by which Great Britain hath been dragged back and faſt bound to the continent.

rank of admiral, in the ſame manner as he had become a general in the land-ſervice.

While prince Galliczen, a general formed under his auſpices, and one of thoſe who ſeconded his enterprizes with the greateſt vigour, completed the reduction of Finland, took the town of Vaſa, and beat the Swedes, the emperor put to ſea, in order to attempt the conqueſt of Aland, an iſland in the Baltic, about twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He ſet out on this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, while his rival Charles XII. was keeping his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Cronſlot, an harbour which he had built a few years before, about four miles from Peterſburg. The new harbour, the fleet, the officers, the ſailors, were all the work of his own hands; and, wherever he turned his eyes, he could behold nothing but what he himſelf had, in ſome meaſure, created.

On the fifteenth of July, the Ruſſian fleet, conſiſting of thirty ſhips of the line, eighty gallies, and an hundred half-gallies, reached the coaſt of Aland. On board of theſe ſhips were twenty thouſand ſoldiers: admiral Apraxin was commander in chief; and the Ruſſian emperor ſerved as rear-admiral. On the ſixteenth the Swediſh fleet, commanded by vice-admiral Erinchild, came up with the enemy; and, though weaker than them by two-thirds, maintained a fight for the ſpace of three hours. The czar attacked the admiral's ſhip, and took her after a ſharp engagement.

The ſame day he landed ſixteen thouſand men on the iſle of Aland; and having taken a number of Swediſh ſoldiers, that had not been able to get on board of Erinchild's fleet, he carried them off in his own ſhips. He returned to his harbour of Cronſlot with Erinchild's large ſhip, three others of a leſs ſize, one frigate, and ſix gallies, all which he had taken in the engagement.

From Cronſlot he ſet ſail for Peterſburg, followed by his own victorious fleet, and the ſhips he had taken from the enemy. On his arrival at Peterſburg, he was ſaluted

ſaluted by a triple diſcharge of an hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. He then made a triumphant entry, which flattered his vanity ſtill more than that at Moſcow, as he received theſe honours in his favourite city, a place where but ten years before there was not a ſingle hut, and where now there were thirty-four thouſand five hundred houſes; in a word, as he ſaw himſelf at the head not only of a victorious navy, but what is more, of the firſt Ruſſian fleet that had ever appeared in the Baltic, and amidſt the acclamations of a people, to whom, before his time, the very name of a fleet was not ſo much as known.

The entry into Peterſburgh was accompanied with much the ſame ceremonies as that into Moſcow. The Swediſh vice-admiral was the chief ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiowitz appeared in the proceſſion as rear-admiral. A Ruſſian nobleman, called Romanodowſky, who commonly repreſented the czar on theſe ſolemn occaſions, was ſeated on a throne, ſurrounded with ſenators. To this nobleman the rear-admiral preſented an account of his victory; and, in reward of his ſervices, was declared vice-admiral. An odd ceremony, but extremely neceſſary, in a country, where military ſubordination was one of the novelties which the czar wanted to introduce.

The emperor of Ruſſia, now victorious over the Swedes by ſea and land, and having aſſiſted in expelling them from Poland, began to domineer there in his turn. He acted as mediator between Auguſtus and the republic; a glory, perhaps, not inferior to that of creating a king. This honour, and, indeed, all the good fortune of Charles, had fallen to the ſhare of the czar; who, it muſt be owned, made a better uſe of theſe advantages; for all his ſucceſſes were ſo managed, as to contribute to the intereſt of his country. If he took a town, the beſt artiſans in it carried their families and their induſtry to Peterſburg. The manufactures, the arts and ſciences of the provinces which he conquered from Sweden, were tranſported into Muſcovy. Thus were his dominions enriched by his victories;

tories; a circumſtance that makes him the moſt excuſable of all conquerors.

Sweden, on the contrary, deſpoiled of almoſt all her foreign provinces, had neither commerce, money, nor credit. Her veteran troops which were formerly ſo formidable, had either fallen in battle, or periſhed with hunger. Upwards of an hundred thouſand Swedes were ſlaves in the vaſt dominions of the czar; and near the ſame number had been ſold to the Turks and Tartars. The human ſpecies ſeemed viſibly to decline in the country; but the king's arrival at Stralſund inſpired them with freſh hopes.

The reſpect and admiration which they had formerly entertained for his ſacred perſon, were ſtill ſo ſtrongly rivetted in the minds of his ſubjects, that the youth came from the country in crowds, and voluntarily offered to enliſt, though there was not a ſufficient number of hands left to cultivate the lands.

THE

THE HISTORY OF CHARLES XII. KING of SWEDEN.

BOOK VIII.

THE CONTENTS.

CHARLES gives his ſiſter in marriage to the prince of HESSE: is beſieged in STRALSUND, and eſcapes to SWEDEN. Schemes of baron de GORTZ, his prime miniſter. Plan of a reconciliation with the CZAR, and of a deſcent upon England. CHARLES beſieges FREDERICSHALL, in NORWAY: is killed. his character. GORTZ is beheaded.

IN the midſt of theſe preparations, the king gave his only ſurviving ſiſter, Ulrica Eleonora, in marriage to Frederic prince of Heſſe-Caſſel. The queen dowager, grandmother of Charles XII. and the princeſs, and then in the eightieth year of her age, did the honours of the table at this ſolemnity, which was celebrated on the fourth of April 1715, in the palace of Stockholm; where ſhe died ſoon after.

The

The marriage was not honoured with the preſence of the king, who was then employed in finiſhing the fortifications of Stralſund, a place of great importance, and threatened with a ſiege by the kings of Pruſſia and Denmark. Nevertheleſs he made his brother-in-law generaliſſimo of all his forces in Sweden. This prince had ſerved the ſtates-general in their wars with the French, and was eſteemed a good general; a qualification which contributed not a little to procure him the ſiſter of Charles XII. in marriage.

Charles's misfortunes now came as thick upon him as his victories had formerly done. In the month of June 1715, the German troops of the king of England, with thoſe of Denmark, inveſted the ſtrong town of Wiſmar, while the combined army of the Danes and Saxons, amounting to thirty-ſix thouſand men, marched towards Stralſund, to form the ſiege of that place. The kings of Pruſſia and Denmark ſunk five Swediſh ſhips a little off Stralſund. The czar was then in the Baltick, with twenty large ſhips of war, and an hundred and fifty tranſports, on board of which were thirty thouſand men. He threatened a deſcent upon Sweden; one while approaching the coaſt of Helſimburg, and at another appearing before Stockholm. All Sweden was in arms upon the coaſts, and every moment expected an invaſion. At the ſame time the czar's land forces drove the Swedes from poſt to poſt, until they had diſpoſſeſſed them of all the places they held in Finland, towards the gulph of Bothnia. But Peter puſhed his conqueſts no farther.

At the mouth of the Oder, a river that divides Pomerania in two, and after waſhing the walls of Stetin falls into the Baltick, lies the little iſle of Uſedom, a place of great importance on account of its ſituation, commanding the Oder both on the right and left; ſo that whoever is maſter of the iſland is likewiſe maſter of the navigation of the river. The king of Pruſſia had diſlodged the Swedes from this place, and taken poſſeſſion of it as well as of Stetin, which he kept ſequeſtered, and all, as he pretended, "For the ſake of peace." The Swedes had retaken Uſedom in May

1715.

1715. They had two forts in the iſland; one of which was the fort of Suine, upon a branch of the Oder, that bore the ſame name; the other, a place of greater conſequence, was called Pennamonder, and ſituated upon another branch of that river. To defend theſe two forts, and indeed the whole iſland, there were only two hundred and fifty Pomeranians, under the command of an old Swediſh officer, called Kuze-Slerp, a man whoſe name deſerves to be immortalized.

On the fourth of Auguſt, the king of Pruſſia ſent fifteen hundred foot and eight hundred dragoons to make a deſcent upon the iſland. They came and landed without oppoſition near the fort of Suine, which being the leaſt important of the two, the Swediſh commander abandoned it to the enemy; and as he could not ſafely divide his men, he retired with his little company to the caſtle of Pennamonder, determined to hold out to the laſt extremity.

There was therefore a neceſſity of beſieging it in form; for which purpoſe a train of artillery was embarked at Stetin, and the Pruſſian troops were reinforced with a thouſand foot and four hundred horſe. On the eighteenth the trenches were opened in two places, and the fort was briſkly battered with cannon and mortars. During the ſiege, a Swediſh ſoldier, who was ſent privately with a letter from Charles XII. found means to land on the iſland, and to ſlip into the fort. The letter he delivered to the commander. The purport was as follows: "Do not fire till the enemy come to the brink of the foſſe. Defend the place to the laſt extremity. I commend you to your good fortune. Charles."

Slerp having read the note, reſolved to obey, and to lay down his life, as he was ordered, for the ſervice of his maſter. On the twenty-ſecond at day-break the aſſault was given. The beſieged having kept in their fire till the ſaw the enemy on the brink of the foſſe, killed an immenſe number of them. But the ditch was full, the breach large, and the aſſailants too numerous; ſo that they entered the caſtle at two different places at once. The commander now thought of nothing but

of

of selling his life dear, and obeying his master's orders. He abandoned the breaches through which the enemy entered; intrenched his little company, who had all the courage and fidelity to follow him behind a bastion, and posted them in such a manner that the could not be surrounded. The enemy came up to him, and were greatly surprized that he did not ask for quarter. He fought for a complete hour; and after having lost the half of his men, was at last killed himself, together with his lieutenant and major. Upon this, the surviving few, amounting to an hundred soldiers and one officer, begged their lives, and were made prisoners of war. Charles's letter was found in the commander's pocket, and carried to the king of Prussia.

At the time that Charles lost Usedom, and the neighbouring isles, which were quickly taken; while Wismar was ready to surrender, and Sweden, destitute of a fleet, was daily threatened with an invasion; he himself was in Stralsund, besieged by an army of thirty-six thousand men.

Stralsund, a town famous over all Europe for the siege which the king of Sweden sustained there, is the strongest place in Pomerania; and is situated between the Baltick and the lake of Franken, near the streights of Gella. It is inaccessible by land, except by a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel, and by fortifications which were thought to be impregnable. There was in it a garrison of about nine thousand men, and what was more than all, the king of Sweden himself. The kings of Prussia and Denmark undertook the siege of this place, with an army of six and thirty thousand men, composed of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons.

The honour of besieging Charles XII. was so powerful a motive, that they soon surmounted every obstacle, and opened the trenches in the night between the nineteenth and twentieth of October 1715. The king of Sweden declared, at the beginning of the siege, that for his own part, he could not comprehend, how a place well fortified, and provided with a sufficient garrison, could possibly be taken. Not but that in the course

courſe of his paſt victories he had taken ſeveral places himſelf, but hardly ever by a regular ſiege. The terror of his arms carried all before it. Beſides, he never judged of other people by himſelf; but always entertained too low an opinion of his enemies. The beſiegers carried on their works with ſurpriſing vigour and reſolution, and were greatly aſſiſted by a very ſingular accident.

It is well known that the Baltick ſea neither ebbs nor flows. The fortifications which covered the town, and which were defended on the weſt by an impaſſable moraſs, and by the ſea on the eaſt, ſeemed to be ſecure from any aſſault. It had hitherto eſcaped the obſervation of every one, that when the weſt wind blows ſtrong, the waves of the Baltic are driven back in ſuch a manner as to leave but three feet depth of water under the fortifications, which had always been ſuppoſed to be waſhed by a branch of the ſea, ſo deep as to be utterly impaſſable. A ſoldier having fallen from the top of the fortifications into the ſea, was ſurpriſed to find a bottom; and thinking that this diſcovery might make his fortune, he deſerted, and went to the quarters of count Wackerbarth, the Saxon general, to inform him that the ſea was fordable, and that he might eaſily penetrate to the Swediſh fortifications. It was nor long before the king of Pruſſia availed himſelf of this piece of intelligence.

Next night about twelve o'clock, the weſt wind ſtill continuing to blow, lieutenant colonel Koppen entered the water, with eighteen hundred men. At the ſame time two thouſand advanced upon the cauſeway that led to the fort; all the Pruſſian artillery fired, and the Danes and Pruſſians gave an alarm on the other ſide.

The Swedes thought they could eaſily repulſe the two thouſand men whom they ſaw advancing with ſo much apparent raſhneſs upon the cauſeway; but all of a ſudden, Koppen, with his eighteen hundred men entered the fort on the ſide towards the ſea. The Swedes ſurrounded and ſurpriſed, could make no reſiſtance; and the poſt was carried after a terrible ſlaughter.

Some

Some of the Swedes fled to the town; the beſiegers purſued them thither, and entered pell-mell along with the fugitives. Two officers and four Saxon ſoldiers were already on the draw-bridge, which the Swedes had juſt time to raiſe; ſo that the men were taken, and the town ſaved for that time.

There were found in the fort twenty-four pieces of cannon, which were immediately turned againſt Stralſund. The ſiege was puſhed with ſuch vigour and reſolution as this ſucceſs could not fail to inſpire. The town was cannonaded and bombarded without intermiſſion.

Oppoſite to Stralſund, in the Baltic Sea, lies the iſle of Rugen, which ſerves as a bulwark to that place, and into which the garriſon and citizens might have retired, could they have found boats to tranſport them thither. This iſland was of the laſt importance to Charles. He plainly perceived that ſhould it fall into the hands of the enemy, he would be immediately beſieged both by ſea and land, and perhaps reduced to ſo great extremities, that he muſt either bury himſelf in the ruins of Stralſund, or elſe become a priſoner to thoſe very enemies whom he had ſo long deſpiſed, and upon whom he had impoſed the moſt ſevere and rigorous terms. But notwithſtanding theſe gloomy proſpects, ſuch was the wretched ſituation of his affairs, that he had not been able to place a ſufficient garriſon in Rugen, where, in effect, there were no more than two thouſand men.

His enemies had been employed for three months paſt in making all the neceſſary preparations for a deſcent upon this iſland; and having at laſt finiſhed a great number of boats, the prince of Anhalt favoured by the goodneſs of the weather, landed twelve thouſand men upon Rugen, on the fifteenth of November. The king, who ſeemed to be every where preſent, was then in the iſland, having lately joined his two thouſand men, who were intrenched near a ſmall harbour, three leagues from the place where the enemy had landed. He put himſelf at the head of this little troop, and obſerving the moſt profound ſilence, advanced

vanced at midnight towards the foe. The prince of Anhalt had already entrenched his forces, a precaution which ſeemed altogether unneceſſary. The inferior officers never dreamed of being attacked the very firſt night, as they imagined Charles to be at Stralſund; but the prince of Anhalt, who well knew what incredible things Charles was capable of attempting, had cauſed a deep foſſe to be ſunk, fenced with chevaux de friſe; and indeed took all his meaſures with as much circumſpection, as if he had had a ſuperior army to contend with.

At two in the morning, Charles reached the enemy's camp, without making the leaſt noiſe. His ſoldiers ſaid to each other, "Come let us pull up the chevaux de friſe." Theſe words being overheard by the centinels, the alarm was inſtantly given in the camp, and the enemy ſtood to their arms. The king, taking up the chevaux de friſe, perceived a deep ditch before him. "Ah! ſays he, is it poſſible? this is more than I expected." However this unexpected event did not diſconcert him. He was alike ignorant of the number of the enemy, and they of his. The darkneſs of the night ſeemed to favour the boldneſs of the attempt. He formed his reſolution in a moment, and jumped into the ditch, accompanied by the braveſt of his men, and inſtantly followed by all the reſt. The chevaux de friſe, which were preſently plucked up, the levelled earth, the trunks and branches of ſuch trees as they could find, and the carcaſes of the ſoldiers that were killed by random ſhot, ſerved for faſcines. The king, the generals, and the braveſt of the officers and ſoldiers, mounted upon the ſhoulders of others, as in an aſſault. The fight began in the enemy's camp. The irreſiſtible impetuoſity of the Swedes ſoon threw the Danes and Pruſſians into confuſion; but the numbers were too unequally matched. After a keen diſpute for a quarter of an hour, the Swedes were repulſed, and obliged to repaſs the foſſe. The prince of Anhalt purſued them into a plain, little thinking it was Charles XII. that fled before him. The unhappy monarch rallied his troops in the open field, and the battle was renewed with

equal fury on both ſides. Grothuſen, the king's favourite, and general Dardoff, fell dead at his feet. In the heat of the fight Charles paſſed over the body of the latter, who was ſtill breathing; and During, who had accompanied him in his journey from Turky to Stralſund, was killed before his face.

In the midſt of the fray, a Daniſh lieutenant, whoſe name I have not been able to learn, knew the king; and ſeizing his ſword with one hand, and with the other dragging him by the hair, "Surrender yourſelf, ſays he, or you are a dead man." The king drew a piſtol from his belt, and with his left hand, fired it at the officer, who died of the wound the next morning. The name of king Charles, which the Dane had pronounced, immediately drew a crowd of the enemy together. The The king was ſurrounded, and received a muſket ſhot below his left breaſt. The wound, which he called a contuſion, was two fingers deep. Charles was on foot, and in the moſt imminent danger of either being killed or taken priſoner. At that critical moment count Poniatowſki fought near his majeſty's perſon. He had ſaved his life at Pultowa, and had now the good fortune to ſave it once more in the battle of Rugen, by putting him on his horſe.

The Swedes retired to a part of the iſland called Alteferra, where there was a fort, of which they were ſtill maſters. From thence the king paſſed over to Stralſund, obliged to abandon his brave troops, who had ſo courageouſly aſſiſted him in this daring enterprize, and who, two days after, were all made priſoners of war.

Among the priſoners was that unhappy French regiment, compoſed of the ſhattered remains of the battle of Hochſtet, which had entered into the ſervice of Auguſtus, and afterwards into that of the king of Sweden. Moſt of the ſoldiers were now incorporated in a new regiment, commanded by the prince of Anhalt's ſon, who was their fourth maſter.

The commander of this wandering regiment in the iſle of Rugen was that fame count de Villelongue, who had ſo nobly expoſed his life at Adrianople to ſerve king Charles XII. He was taken priſoner, with his men,

men, and but poorly rewarded in the ſequel for all his ſervices, labours, and ſufferings.

After all theſe prodigies of valour, which tended only to weaken his forces, the king, ſhut up in Stralſund, which was every moment in danger of being ſtormed, behaved in much the ſame manner as he had done at Bender. Unappalled by ſo many ſurrounding dangers, he employed the day in making ditches and entrenchments behind the walls, and by night he ſallied out upon the enemy. Mean while Stralſund was battered in breach: the bombs fell thick as hail upon the houſes, and half the town was reduced to aſhes. The citizens were ſo far from complaining, that, filled with the higheſt veneration for their royal maſter, whoſe vigilance, temperance, and courage, they could not ſufficiently admire, they were all become ſoldiers under him. They accompanied him in all his ſallies, and ſerved him in place of a ſecond garriſon.

One day as the king was dictating ſome letters to his ſecretary, that were to be ſent to Sweden, a bomb fell on the houſe, pierced the roof, and burſt near the royal apartment. One half of the floor was ſhattered to pieces; but the cloſet in which the king was, being partly ſurrounded by a thick wall, received no damage; and what was remarkably fortunate, none of the ſplinters that flew about in the air, came in at the cloſet door, which happened to be open. The report of the bomb, and the craſhing noiſe it occaſioned in the houſe, which ſeemed ready to tumble about their ears, made the ſecretary drop his pen. "What is the reaſon, ſays the king, with great compoſure, that you do not write?" The poor ſecretary could only bring out with a faultering voice; "The the bomb, ſir." "Well, replies the king, and what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating? Go on."

There was, at that time, an ambaſſador of France ſhut up with Charles in Stralſund. This was one Colbert, count de Croiſſy, a lieutenant-general in the French army, brother to the marquis de Torcy, the famous miniſter of State, and a relation of the celebrated Colbert, whoſe name ought never to be for-

gotten in France. To ſend a man on an embaſſy to Charles XII. or into trenches was much the ſame. The king would talk with Croiſſy for hours together in places of the greateſt danger, while the ſoldiers were falling on every ſide of them by the fire of the bombs and cannon; Charles, in all appearance, inſenſible of the riſk he run, and the ambaſſador not chooſing to give his majeſty ſo much as a hint that there were more proper places to talk of buſineſs. This miniſter exerted his utmoſt efforts, before the ſiege commenced, to effect an accommodation between the kings of Sweden and Pruſſia; but the demands of the latter were too high, and the former would make no conceſſions. So that the count de Croiſſy derived no other advantage from his embaſſy to Charles XII. than the pleaſure of being intimately acquainted with that extraordinary man. He frequently lay by his majeſty upon the ſame cloak; and, by ſharing with him in all his dangers and fatigues, had acquired a right of talking to him with greater freedom. Charles encouraged this boldneſs in thoſe he loved; and would ſometimes ſay to the count de Croiſſy, *Veni, maledicamus de rege:* "Come now let us make a little free with the character of Charles XII." This account I had from the ambaſſador himſelf.

Croiſſy continued in the town till the thirteenth of November, when, having obtained from the enemy a paſſport for himſelf and his baggage, he took his leave of the king, who ſtill remained amidſt the ruins of Stralſund, with a garriſon diminiſhed by one half, but firmly reſolved to ſtand an aſſault.

And two days after, an aſſault was actually made upon the horn-work. Twice did the enemy take it, and twice were they repulſed. In this rencounter the king fought amidſt his grenadiers; but at laſt ſuperior numbers prevailed, and the enemy remained maſters of the place. Charles continued in the town two days after this, expecting every moment a general aſſault. On the twenty-firſt he ſtayed till midnight upon a little ravelin that was entirely demoliſhed by the bombs and cannon. Next day the principal officers conjured him

to

to quit a place which he could no longer defend. But to retreat was now become as dangerous as to ſtay. The Baltic was covered with Ruſſian and Daniſh ſhips. There were no veſſels in the harbour of Stralſund, but one ſmall bark with ſails and oars. The great danger which rendered this retreat ſo glorious, was the very thing that prompted Charles to attempt it. He embarked at midnight on the twentieth of December, 1715, accompanied by ten perſons only. They were obliged to break the ice with which the water of the harbour was covered; a hard and laborious taſk, which they were forced to continue for ſeveral hours before the bark could ſail freely. The enemy's admirals had ſtrict orders not to allow Charles to eſcape from Stralſund; but to take him, dead or alive. Happily for him, they were under the wind, and could not come near him. He ran a ſtill greater riſk in paſſing by a place called la Babette, in the iſle of Rugen, where the Danes had erected a battery of twelve cannon, from which they fired upon him. The mariners ſpread every ſail and plyed every oar in order to get clear of the enemy. But two men were killed at the king's ſide by one cannon ball, and the ſhip's maſts were ſhattered by another. Through all theſe dangers, however, did the king eſcape unhurt, and at laſt came up with two of his own ſhips that were cruizing in the Baltic. Next day Stralſund was ſurrendered, and the garriſon made priſoners of war. Charles landed at Iſted in Scania, and forthwith repaired to Carelſcroon, in a condition very different from what he was in, when, about fifteen years before, he ſet ſail from that harbour in a ſhip of a hundred and twenty guns, to give laws to the North.

As he was ſo near his capital, it was expected that after ſuch a long abſence, he would pay it a viſit; but he was determined not to enter it again till he had obtained ſome ſignal victory. Beſides, he could not bear the thoughts of reviſiting a people by whom he was beloved, and whom nevertheleſs he was obliged to oppreſs, in order to enable him to make head againſt his enemies. He wanted only to ſee his ſiſter, with whom

he appointed an interview on the banks of the lake Weter, in Oſtrogothia. Thither he rode poſt attended only by one ſervant, and after having ſpent a day with her returned to Carelſcroon.

From this place, where he paſſed the winter, he iſſued out orders for raiſing recruits through the whole kingdom. He thought that his ſubjects were born for no other purpoſe than to follow him to the field of battle, and he had actually accuſtomed them to entertain the ſame opinion. Some were enliſted who were not above fifteen years of age. In ſeveral villages there were none left but old men, women, and children; and in many places the women were obliged to plough the land alone.

It was ſtill more difficult to procure a fleet. In order to ſupply that defect as well as poſſible, commiſſions were granted to the owners of privateers, who, upon obtaining certain privileges unreaſonable in themſelves, and deſtructive to the community, equipped a few ſhips; and theſe poor efforts were the laſt that the declining ſtate of Sweden was now capable of making. To defray the expences of all theſe preparations, there was a neceſſity for encroaching upon the property of the ſubject; and every kind of extortion was practiſed under the ſpecious name of taxes and duties. Strict ſearch was made into every houſe, and one half of the proviſions that were found in them was conveyed to the king's magazines. All the iron in the kingdom was bought up for his uſe. This the government paid for in paper, and ſold it out for ready money. A tax was laid on all ſuch as had any mixture of ſilk in their cloaths, or wore periwigs or gilded ſwords; and the duty of hearth-money was immoderately high. The people, oppreſſed with ſuch a load of taxes, would have revolted under any other king; but the pooreſt peaſant in Sweden knew that his maſter led a life ſtill more hard and frugal than himſelf: ſo that every one ſubmitted cheerfully to thoſe hardſhips which the king was the firſt to ſuffer.

All ſenſe of private misfortunes was ſwallowed up in the apprehenſion of public danger. The Swedes expected

pected every moment to ſee their country invaded by the Ruſſians, the Danes, the Pruſſians, the Saxons, and even by the Engliſh; and their fear of this hoſtile viſit was ſo ſtrong and prevalent, that thoſe who had money or valuable effects took care to bury them in the earth.

An Engliſh fleet had already appeared in the Baltic, though its particular deſtination was not known; and the czar had given his word to the king of Denmark, that, in the ſpring of 1716, the Ruſſians ſhould join the Danes, in order to make a deſcent upon Sweden.

But how great was the aſtoniſhment of all Europe, ever attentive to the fortune of Charles XII. when, inſtead of defending his own country, which was threatened with an invaſion by ſo many princes, they ſaw him, in the month of March 1716, paſſing over into Norway, with twenty thouſand men.

From the time of Hannibal to that of Charles XII. the world had never ſeen any general, who unable to make head againſt his enemies at home, had boldly carried the war into the heart of their own dominions. The prince of Heſſe, his brother-in-law, attended him in this expedition.

There is no travelling from Sweden to Norway but through the moſt dangerous by-ways; and when theſe are paſt, one meets with ſo many flaſhes of water formed by the ſea amongſt the rocks, that there is a neceſſity for making bridges every day. A handful of Danes might have ſtopped the progreſs of the whole Swediſh army; but this ſudden invaſion had not been foreſeen. Europe was ſtill more aſtoniſhed to ſee the czar, amidſt all theſe mighty events, remaining inactive, and not making a deſcent upon Sweden, as had formerly been ſtipulated between him a nd his allies.

This inactivity was owing to one of the greateſt and moſt difficult ſchemes that ever was formed by the mind of man.

Henry de Gortz, a native of Franconia, and baron of the empire, having done ſeveral good offices to the king of Sweden, during that monarch's abode at Bender, was now become his favourite, and firſt miniſter.

Never man was at once ſo bold and ſo artful; ſo full of expedients amidſt misfortunes; ſo unbounded in his deſigns, or ſo active in the proſecution of them. No project too great for his daring genius to attempt; no means too difficult for his ſagacity and penetration to diſcover; in purſuing his favourite ſchemes he was equally prodigal of preſents and promiſes, of oaths, of truth and of falſhood.

From Sweden he went to France, England, and Holland, to examine thoſe ſecret ſprings which he afterwards meant to put in motion. He was capable of throwing all Europe into combuſtion; and his inclination was equal to his power. What his maſter was at the head of an army, that was de Gortz in the cabinet; by which means he had acquired a greater aſcendant over Charles XII. than any miniſter before him had ever poſſeſſed.

Charles, who, at twenty years of age, had preſcribed orders to count Piper, was now content to receive inſtructions from baron de Gortz, reſigning himſelf to the direction of that miniſter with ſo much the leſs reſerve, as his misfortunes obliged him to liſten to the advice of others, and as Gortz never gave him any but ſuch as was ſuitable to his undaunted courage. He obſerved, that, of all the ſovereigns united againſt Sweden, George, elector of Hanover, and king of England, was the prince againſt whom Charles was moſt highly incenſed; becauſe he was the only one to whom he had never done the leaſt injury; and becauſe George had engaged in the quarrel under the pretext of compromiſing matters, but in reality with a view of preſerving Bremen and Verden, to which he ſeemed to have no other right than that of having bought them for a trifle from the king of Denmark, to whom, after all, they did not belong.

Nor was it long before he diſcovered, that the czar was ſecretly diſſatisfied with his allies, who had all conſpired to hinder him from acquiring any poſſeſſions in Germany, where that monarch, already become too formidable, wanted only to obtain a footing. Wiſmar, the

the only town that ſtill remained to the Swedes on the frontiers of Germany, was, on the fourteenth of February 1716, ſurrendered to the Danes and Pruſſians, who would not ſo much as allow the Ruſſian troops that were in Mecklenburg to be preſent at the ſiege. Such repeated marks of jealouſy for two years together, had alienated the czar's mind from the common cauſe, and perhaps prevented the ruin of Sweden. There are many inſtances of ſeveral ſtates in alliance being conquered by a ſingle power; but hardly any of a great empire ſubdued by ſeveral allies. If it ſhould happen to be humbled by their joint efforts, their inteſtine diviſions ſoon allow it to retrieve its former grandeur.

Ever ſince the year 1714, the czar had had it in his power to make a deſcent upon Sweden; but whether it was that he could not perfectly agree with the kings of Poland, England, Denmark, and Pruſſia, allies juſtly jealous of his growing power, or that he did not as yet think his troops ſufficiently diſciplined to attack in their own territories a people, whoſe very peaſants had beat the flower of the Daniſh forces, he ſtill put off the execution of the enterprize.

But what had chiefly interrupted the progreſs of his arms was the want of money. The czar, though one of the moſt powerful monarchs in the univerſe, was far from being one of the richeſt; his revenues, at that time, not exceeding twenty-four millions of livres. He had diſcovered indeed ſome mines of gold, ſilver, copper, and iron; but the profits ariſing from theſe was ſtill uncertain, and the expence of the working them was intolerably great. He had likewiſe eſtabliſhed an extenſive commerce; but that in its infancy rather filled him with the agreeable hopes of what it might one day prove, than was really productive of any preſent advantage: nor did the provinces which he had lately conquered encreaſe his revenues, in the ſame proportion as they augmented his power and glory. It required a long time to heal the wounds of Livonia, a country extremely fertile, but deſolated by fire, ſword, and diſtemper, and by a war of fifteen years continuance,

deſtitute of inhabitants, and as yet chargeable to the conqueror. His finances were further drained by the large fleets he maintained, and by the new enterprizes which he was daily undertaking. He had even been reduced to the wretched expedient of raiſing the value of money, a remedy that can never cure the evils of ſtate, and is, in a particular manner, prejudicial to a country, whoſe exports fall ſhort of their imports.

Such was the foundation upon which de Gortz had built his ſcheme of a revolution. He ventured to adviſe the king of Sweden to purchaſe a peace from the Ruſſian emperor at any price, intimating to him, at the ſame time, that the czar was highly incenſed at the kings of Poland and England, and aſſuring him that he and Peter Alexiowitz, when joined together, would be able to ſtrike terror into the reſt of Europe.

There was no poſſibility of making a peace with the czar, without giving up a great many of thoſe provinces which lie to the eaſt and north of the Baltic ſea. But Gortz entreated the king to conſider, that, by yielding up theſe provinces, which the czar already poſſeſſed, and which Charles at preſent was unable to recover, he might have the honour of reſtoring Staniſlaus to the throne of Poland, of replacing the ſon of James II. on that of England, and of re-eſtabliſhing the duke of Holſtein in the peaceable poſſeſſion of his dominions.

Charles, pleaſed with theſe mighty projects, upon which, however, he laid no great ſtreſs, gave carte blanche to his miniſter. Gortz ſet out from Sweden, furniſhed with full powers to act without controul, and to treat as his maſter's plenipotentiary with all thoſe princes with whom he ſhould think proper to negociate. The firſt ſtep was to ſound the court of Moſcow, which he did by means of a Scotchman, called Areſkine, firſt phyſician to the czar, and ſtrongly attached to the pretender's intereſt, as indeed moſt of the Scots were, except ſuch as ſubſiſted upon favours from the court of London *.

This

* The Scottiſh nation will not thank Mr. de Voltaire for this aſſertion,

This phyſician repreſented to prince Menzikoff the greatneſs and importance of the ſcheme, with all the warmth of a man who was ſo much intereſted in its ſucceſs. Prince Menzikoff reliſhed the propoſal, and the czar approved of it. Inſtead of making a deſcent upon Sweden, as had been ſtipulated between him and his allies, he ſent his troops to winter in Mecklenburgh, whither he ſoon after repaired himſelf. This he did under the ſpecious pretext of terminating ſome diſputes that had lately ariſen between the duke and his nobility; but in reality with a view to proſecute his favourite ſcheme of obtaining a principality in Germany, and hoping he ſhould be able to perſuade the duke of Mecklenburgh to ſell him his ſovereignty.

The allies were highly provoked at theſe proceedings; and the more ſo, as they did not chooſe to have ſuch a formidable neighbour as Peter Alexiowitz, who, could he once obtain any footing in Germany, might one day procure himſelf to be elected emperor, to the great oppreſſion of all the princes of the empire. But the more they were provoked, the more was the grand ſcheme of de Gortz forwarded. This miniſter, the better to conceal his ſecret intrigues, affected to negociate with the confederate princes, who were likewiſe amuſed with vain hopes from the czar.

Charles XII. and his brother-in-law, the prince of Heſſe, were all this while in Norway, at the head of twenty thouſand men. The country was defended by no more than eleven thouſand Danes, divided into ſeveral detached parties, who were all put to the ſword by the king and the prince of Heſſe.

Charles advanced towards Chriſtiana, the capital of the kingdom; and fortune began once more to ſmile upon him in this part of the globe. But he never took ſufficient care to provide for the ſubſiſtence of his troops. A Daniſh fleet and army were coming to the relief of Norway; and Charles being in want of proviſions,

aſſertion, which is, by no means, conſiſtent with truth. Were it neceſſary it might be eaſily proved, that the whig party has greatly preponderated in Scotland ever ſince the union.

viſions, was obliged to return to Sweden, there to wait the iſſue of his miniſter's mighty projects.

The execution of the ſcheme required at once inviolable ſecrecy, and vaſt preparations, two things almoſt incompatible. Gortz even ranſacked the Aſiatic ſeas for an aſſiſtance, which, however odious in appearance, would nevertheleſs have been extremely proper for making a deſcent upon Scotland, and for furniſhing Sweden with ſhips, men and money.

The pirates of all nations, and eſpecially thoſe of England, having entered into a mutual aſſociation, had long infeſted the ſeas of Europe and America. Driven at laſt from all their wonted haunts, and having no hopes of obtaining any quarter, they had lately retired to the coaſts of Madagaſcar, a large iſland in the eaſt of Africa. Theſe men were all of them deſperadoes, and moſt of them famous for actions which wanted nothing but juſtice to render them truly heroic. They were endeavouring to find out a prince that would receive them under his protection; but the laws of nations ſhut all the harbours in the world againſt them.

No ſooner were they informed that Charles XII. was returned to Sweden, than they began to flatter themſelves with the agreeable hopes, that that prince, paſſionately fond of war, obliged at preſent to be engaged in it, and in great want as well of ſhips as ſoldiers, would be glad to make an agreement with them upon reaſonable terms. With this view they ſent a deputy to Europe on board of a Dutch veſſel, to make a propoſal to baron de Gortz, that if they were ſure of meeting with a favourable reception in the port of Gottenburg, they would inſtantly repair thither with ſixty ſhips loaded with riches *.

The

* This has ſo much the air of a fable, that we know not how to believe it. True it is, a few pirates fixed their habitation on the iſland of Madagaſcar; but they lived miſerably, ſingle, and ſeparate, like wild beaſts in a ſtate of nature, without plan, ſubordination, or ſociety, without force or ſhipping: for what ſhips they had taken, either periſhed, rotted, or were broken up by their own hands.

The baron prevailed upon the king to agree to the propoſal; and next year Cromſtrom and Mendal, two Swediſh gentlemen, were ſent to finiſh the treaty with the corſairs of Madagaſcar.

But a more honourable and a more powerful ſupport was ſoon after found in cardinal Alberoni, a man of an extraordinary genius, who governed Spain long enough for his own glory; but too ſhort a time for the grandeur and happineſs of the kingdom.

He readily embraced the propoſal of placing the ſon of James II. on the throne of England. Nevertheleſs, as he was but juſt entered into the miniſtry, and had the affairs of Spain to regulate, before he could think of throwing other kingdoms into confuſion, it was not likely that he would be able for a conſiderable time to put this grand machine in motion. But in leſs than two years he changed the face of affairs in Spain, reſtored that kingdom to her former degree of credit, among the other powers of Europe, prevailed upon the Turks, as is commonly ſuppoſed, to attack the emperor of Germany, and attempted, at one and the ſame time, to deprive the duke of Orleans of the regency of France, and king George of the crown of England. So dangerous may one ſingle man prove, when he is veſted with abſolute authority in a powerful ſtate, and is endowed with courage and greatneſs of ſoul.

Gortz having thus ſcattered, in the courts of Muſcovy and Spain, the firſt ſparks of that flame which he intended to kindle, went privately to France, and from thence to Holland, where he had an interview with ſome of the pretender's adherents.

He informed himſelf more particularly of the ſtrength, the number, and diſpoſition of the malecontents in England, of the money they could furniſh, and the troops they could raiſe. The malecontents required only a reinforcement of ten thouſand men, with whoſe aſſiſtance, they ſaid, they ſhould be fully able to effectuate a revolution.

Count Gillembourg, the Swediſh ambaſſador in England, being furniſhed with proper inſtructions by baron Gortz, had ſeveral conferences at London, with the

the chiefs of the diſaffected party. He encouraged them with the moſt flattering hopes of ſucceſs, and readily promiſed them whatever they could wiſh to obtain; and they, on their part, were ſo forward as to furniſh conſiderable ſums of money, which Gortz received in Holland. He treated about the purchaſe of ſome ſhips, and bought ſix in Britain, with all kinds of arms.

He then ſent ſeveral officers privately into France, and among others the chevalier de Folard, who having made thirty campaigns in the French armies, without any conſiderable addition to his fortune, had lately offered his ſervice to the king of Sweden, not ſo much from any intereſted views, as from a deſire of ſerving under a king of ſuch a glorious reputation. Folard likewiſe hoped to recommend to that prince the improvements he had made in the art of war, which he had always ſtudied as a philoſopher; and he has ſince publiſhed his diſcoveries in his commentary on Polybius. Charles XII. who had made war himſelf in a manner entirely new, and was never guided by cuſtom in any thing, was pleaſed with his notions; and reſolved to employ him in his projected invaſion of Scotland. The ſecret orders of baron de Gortz were faithfully executed in France by the chevalier de Folard. A great number of French, and a ſtill greater number of Iriſh officers engaged in this uncommon conſpiracy, which was hatching at one and the ſame time in England, France, and Muſcovy, and the branches of which were ſecretly extended from one end of Europe to the other.

Theſe preparations, however great, were only a ſample of what de Gortz intended to do; though it was a matter of no ſmall conſequence to have thus ſet the ſcheme a-going. But the point of the greateſt importance, and without which nothing could ſucceed, was to bring about a peace between the czar and Charles; to accompliſh which, many difficulties were to be removed. Baron Oſterman, miniſter of ſtate in Muſcovy, refuſed at firſt to come into de Gortz's meaſures. The former was as cautious and circumſpect as the latter was bold and enterpriſing. The one, ſlow and

and regular in his politics, was for allowing every thing time to ripen: the other of a daring genius, and impatient ſpirit, had no ſooner ſown the ſeed than he was preſently for reaping the harveſt. Oſterman fearing that the emperor, his maſter, dazzled with the ſplendour of this enterprize, would grant the Swedes a too advantageous peace, delayed the concluſion of it by a variety of obſtacles and procraſtinations.

Happily for baron de Gortz, the czar himſelf came to Holland in the beginning of the year 1717. His intention was to go from thence into France. He was deſirous of ſeeing that famous nation, which, for more than a hundred years paſt, hath been cenſured, envied, and imitated by all its neighbours. He wanted to gratify his inſatiable curioſity of ſeeing and learning every thing, and, at the ſame time, to exerciſe his politics.

Gortz had two interviews with him at the Hague; and in theſe he made greater progreſs than he could have done in ſix months with the plenipotentiaries. Every thing wore a favourable aſpect. His mighty projects ſeemed to be covered under the veil of impenetrable ſecrecy; and he flattered himſelf that Europe would know them only by their being carried into execution. Mean while he talked of nothing but peace at the Hague, he openly declared that he would always conſider the king of England as the pacifier of the North; and he even preſſed, (in appearance at leaſt) the holding of a congreſs at Brunſwick, in which the jarring intereſts of Sweden and her enemies might be amicably adjuſted.

Theſe intrigues were firſt diſcovered by the duke of Orleans, regent of France, who had ſpies in every part of Europe. Men of this character, who made a trade of ſelling the ſecrets of their friends, and get their livelihood by being informers, and frequently by inventing and propagating the groſſeſt lies and calumnies, were ſo much increaſed in France under his government, that one half of the nation were become ſpies upon the other. The duke of Orleans, who was connected with the king

of

of England by perſonal ties, acquainted him with the ſecret plot that was hatching againſt him.

At the ſame time the Dutch, who began to take umbrage at the behaviour of de Gortz, communicated their ſuſpicions to the Engliſh miniſter. Gortz and Gillembourg were proſecuting their ſchemes with great vigour, when they were both arreſted, the one at Daventer, in Guelderland, and the other at London.

As Gillembourg, the Swediſh ambaſſador, had violated the law of nations, by conſpiring againſt the prince to whom he was ſent in a public character, the Engliſh made no ſcruple to violate the ſame law, by arreſting his perſon. But all the world was ſurpriſed to ſee the ſtates-general impriſon the baron de Gortz, in order to gratify the king of England, an inſtance of complaiſance hardly to be parallelled in hiſtory. They even appointed the count de Welderen to examine him. This formality was only an aggravation of their former inſult, which, being rendered entirely abortive, produced no other effect than to cover them with confuſion. "Do you know me?" ſays Gortz to the count de Welderen. "Yes, Sir!" replies the Dutchman, "Well, then, ſays de Gortz, if you do know, you muſt be ſenſible that I will not ſpeak one word more than I pleaſe." The examination was carried no farther. All the foreign miniſters, and eſpecially the marquis de Montelon, the Spaniſh ambaſſador in England, proteſted againſt the violence offered to the perſon of Gortz and Gillembourg. The Dutch were inexcuſeable. They had not only violated a moſt ſacred law, by ſeizing the prime-miniſter of the king of Sweden, who had formed no plots againſt them; but they acted in direct oppoſition to the ſpirit of that ineſtimable liberty which hath drawn ſo many foreigners into their country, and is the foundation of all their greatneſs.

With regard to the king of England, he had acted conſiſtently with the ſtricteſt principles of juſtice, in impriſoning his enemy. He publiſhed in his own vindication, the letters of Gortz and Gillembourg, which were found among the papers of the latter. The king of Sweden was in Scania, when he received theſe printed

ed letters, together with the news of the two miniſters being impriſoned. He aſked with a ſmile, if they had not likewiſe printed his letters; and gave immediate orders for arreſting the Engliſh reſident at Stockholm, with all his family and domeſtics. The Dutch reſident was forbid the court, and ſtrictly watched in all his motions. Charles, mean while, neither avowed nor diſclaimed the proceedings of de Gortz. Too proud to deny a ſcheme which he had once approved, and too wiſe to acknowledge a plot which had thus been ſtifled in its birth, he maintained a diſdainful ſilence towards England and Holland.

The czar took a very different courſe. As his name was not expreſsly mentioned, but only obſcurely hinted at in the papers of Gortz and Gillembourg, he wrote a long letter to the king of England, complimenting him upon the diſcovery of the plot, and aſſuring him of the moſt inviolable friendſhip; and king George received his proteſtations without believing them, though he thought it moſt prudent in the preſent caſe to pretend that he did. A plot contrived by private men is annihilated the moment it is diſcovered; but a conſpiracy, formed by kings, the more it is known, the ſtronger it grows.

The czar arrived at Paris in the month of May 1717, to view the beauties of art and nature; and to viſit the academies, public libraries, the cabinets of the curious, and the royal palaces, were not the only ends of his journey. He made a propoſal to the duke of Orleans for concluding a treaty, which, had it taken place, would have completed the greatneſs of Muſcovy. His deſign was to compromiſe matters with the king of Sweden, who would yield to him ſome large provinces, to deprive the Danes of the empire of the Baltic ſea, to weaken the Engliſh by a civil war, and to make all the trade of the North to centre in Ruſſia. He had even ſome thoughts of ſetting up Staniſlaus afreſh againſt Auguſtus, that, ſo the fire being every where kindled, he might have it in his power either to quench or blow it up, as ſhould be moſt conducive to his intereſt. With this view he propoſed to the regent of France

France to act as mediator between Sweden and Muſcovy, and to make a league offenſive and defenſive with theſe two crowns, and that of Spain. This treaty, ſeemingly ſo natural and ſo advantageous to the ſeveral nations concerned, and which would have put the balance of power in Europe into their hands, was nevertheleſs rejected by the duke of Orleans. Nay, at that very time, he entered into engagements of a quite oppoſite nature. He made a league with the emperor of Germany, and with George king of England. The reaſons of ſtate had ſo much altered the views and inclinations of all the princes of Europe, that the czar was ready to declare againſt his old ally, Auguſtus, and to eſpouſe the cauſe of Charles, his mortal enemy; while France, in order to oblige the Germans and the Engliſh, was going to make war upon the grandſon of Lewis XIV. after having ſo long ſupported him againſt theſe very enemies, at a prodigious expence of blood and treaſure. All that the czar could obtain by theſe indirect meaſures was to prevail upon the regent to interpoſe his good offices to procure the enlargement of Gortz and Gillembourg. He returned to his own dominions about the end of June, after having ſhewn the French a ſight they had never ſeen before, an emperor travelling for inſtruction. But the generality of that people were only ſtruck with his rude unpoliſhed manners, the reſult of his bad education; while the legiſlator, the great man, and the creator of a new nation, entirely eſcaped the notice of theſe ſuperficial obſervers.

What the czar ſought for in the duke of Orleans, he ſoon found in cardinal Alberoni, who now governed the Spaniſh councils with unlimited ſway. Alberoni deſired nothing ſo much as the reſtoration of the pretender. This he did both as he was miniſter of Spain, which had been ſo ill treated by the Engliſh; as he was a perſonal enemy to the duke of Orleans, who was leagued with England againſt Spain; and, in fine, as he was a prieſt of that church, for the ſake of which the pretender's father had ſo fooliſhly loſt his crown.

The

The duke of Ormond, as much beloved in England as the duke of Marlborough was admired, had left his country at the acceſſion of king George, and retired to Madrid. This nobleman was now veſted with full powers by the king of Spain and the pretender; and, accompanied by one Irnegan, another native of England, a man of fine addreſs, and an enterpriſing ſpirit, he went to meet the czar in his way to Mittau in Courland. He demanded the princeſs Anna Petrowna, the czar's daughter, in marriage for the ſon of James II. * hoping that this alliance would the more ſtrongly attach the czar to the intereſts of that unhappy prince. But this propoſal, inſtead of forwarding, retarded, at leaſt for ſome time, the progreſs of the negociations. Baron de Gortz, among his other projects, had long ſet apart this princeſs for the duke of Holſtein, to whom, in effect ſhe was ſoon after married. The moment he was informed of the duke of Ormond's propoſal, he became jealous of its ſucceſs, and employed every art to render it abortive. He, as well as count Gillembourg, was ſet at liberty in the month of Auguſt, the king of Sweden not even deigning to offer the leaſt apology to the king of England, nor to expreſs the ſlighteſt diſapprobation of his miniſter's conduct.

At the ſame time, the Engliſh reſident and all his family were releaſed at Stockholm, where they had been treated with much more ſeverity than Gillembourg had been at London.

Gortz, being now at liberty, behaved like an implacable enemy, prompted not only by the powerful motives by which he had been formerly actuated, but inſtigated by a ſpirit of revenge, on account of his late impriſonment. He inſtantly poſted away to the czar, and,

* The truth of all theſe particulars is confirmed by cardinal Alberoni himſelf, in a letter of thanks which he wrote to the author. M. Norberg, whoſe ignorance of the affairs of Europe, can only be equalled by the poverty of his genius, alledges that the duke of Ormond left England not upon the acceſſion of George I. but immediately after the death of queen Anne; as if forſooth George I. had not been the immediate ſucceſſor of that queen.

and, by his artful inſinuations, obtained a greater aſcendant over that prince than ever. He aſſured him, that, in leſs than three months, he would, in conjunction with a ſingle plenipotentiary from Ruſſia, remove every obſtacle that retarded the concluſion of a peace with Sweden. Taking a map in his hand, which had been drawn by the czar himſelf, and making a line from Wibourg, all the way to the frozen ſea, running along the lake Ladoga, he undertook to perſuade his maſter to give up all the country lying to the eaſtward of that line, as well as Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia. He then hinted at a propoſal of marriage between his czariſh majeſty's daughter and the duke of Holſtein, flattering the czar with the agreeable hopes that the duke might poſſibly be prevailed upon to yield him up his dominions for an equivalent, by which acquiſition he would become a member of the empire, and that either himſelf or ſome of his deſcendents might one day obtain the imperial crown. By theſe means he gratified the ambitious views of the Ruſſian monarch, and deprived the pretender of all hopes of marrying the czarinian princeſs, at the ſame time that he opened to him a more tempting project in England, and thus accompliſhed all his own projects at once.

The czar named the iſle of Aland for holding the conference between Oſterman, his miniſter of ſtate, and baron de Gortz. He deſired the duke of Ormond to return to Spain, that he might not give too great cauſe of offence to the Engliſh, with whom he had no intention of coming to an open rupture, till he ſhould be ready to make the projected invaſion. But Irnegan, the duke's confident, was allowed to ſtay at Peterſburg, where he lived with ſo much privacy and caution, that he never came abroad in the day-time, nor ever converſed with any of the czar's miniſters, except in the diſguiſe of a peaſant or Tartar.

Immediately after the duke of Ormond's departure, the czar acquainted the king of England with the high compliment he had paid him in diſmiſſing the greateſt man in the pretender's faction; and baron Gortz returne d to Sweden, fluſhed with hopes of ſucceſs.

Gortz

Gortz found his maſter at the head of thirty-five thouſand regular troops, and all the coaſts guarded by the militia. The king wanted nothing but money. But the public credit, as well at home as abroad, was entirely exhauſted. France, which had furniſhed him with ſome ſupplies, during the laſt years of Lewis XIV. refuſed to contribute any more under the regency of the duke of Orleans, who purſued a cauſe very different from that of Lewis. Spain promiſed him ſome remittances; but was not yet in a condition to afford any thing conſiderable.

De Gortz therefore carried a ſcheme into execution which he had tried before his journey to France and Holland. This was to give to copper the value of ſilver; ſo that a piece of the former metal, whoſe intrinſic value was only a halfpenny, ſhould, when ſtamped with the king's mark, paſs for forty pence; as the governors of beſieged towns frequently pay the ſoldiers and citizens in leathern money, in expectation of being one day able to reimburſe them in real coin. This fictitious kind of money, which owes its birth to neceſſity, and can only be rendered current by its being punctually paid in real ſpecie, is like bills of exchange, the imaginary value of which may eaſily exceed the ſolid funds that are in a nation.

Theſe expedients are of great uſe in a free country. They have often ſaved a republic, but ſeldom, or never, fail to ruin a monarchy; for, as the people ſoon begin to grow ſuſpicious, the miniſter is obliged to break his word: the ideal money multiplies a-pace: private men bury their money in the earth; and the whole machine of government falls into a confuſion which is often productive of the moſt pernicious conſequences, as was but too plainly exemplified in the ſate of Sweden.

At firſt the baron de Gortz iſſued out his new coin with equal diſcretion and reſerve: but, by the rapidity of a motion which he could not reſtrain, he was ſoon hurried beyond the limits which he had originally preſcribed to himſelf. All kinds of goods and proviſions having riſen to an immoderate price, he was obliged

to

to increaſe the quantity of his copper coin. But the more it was encreaſed, the leſs was its value; and Sweden, deluged as it were by this falſe money, ſet up a general cry againſt baron de Gortz. The people, who always regarded their ſovereign with a kind of veneration, could not find in their hearts to hate him, and therefore made the weight of their reſentment to fall on a miniſter, who, both as a foreigner and chief director of the finances, was doubly expoſed to the public odium.

But what entirely completed his ruin was a tax he attempted to impoſe on the clergy. The clergy, who are too apt to join their own cauſe to that of the Supreme Being, called him an atheiſt, becauſe he demanded their money. Some of the new copper coin being ſtamped with the figures of the heathen gods, they thence took occaſion to call thoſe pieces the gods of baron de Gortz.

To this public odium under which he laboured, was added the jealouſy of the miniſters; the more implacable in their reſentment as their power was the leſs. The king's ſiſter, and the prince her huſband, dreaded him, as a man attached from his birth to the duke of Holſtein, and might one day be able to place the crown of Sweden on his head. In a word, he had incurred the hatred of the whole nation, Charles alone excepted; but this general averſion ſerved only to enſure to him the friendſhip of the king, whoſe maxim it always was to be the more inflexible the more he was contradicted. Accordingly, he now relied upon the baron with an almoſt implicit confidence; gave him an abſolute power in the interior government of the kingdom; and committed to his care whatever related to the negociations with the czar, preſſing him above all things to haſten the conference that was to be held in the iſland of Aland.

And, indeed, Gortz had no ſooner regulated the finances, (a work which had hitherto detained him at Stockholm) than he ſet out on his journey for the place appointed, in order to finiſh, with the czar's miniſter, the grand ſcheme he had projected.

The

The preliminary articles of that alliance, which was wholly to have changed the face of affairs in Europe, were found among de Gortz's papers after his death, and were as follow:

The czar was to keep the whole of Livonia, and part of Ingria and Carelia to himſelf, and to reſtore the reſt to Sweden. He was to join his efforts with thoſe of Charles XII. in order to reſtore Staniſlaus to the throne of Poland, and to enter that country with eighty thouſand Ruſſians, to dethrone the very king in whoſe defence he had waged a war of ten years continuance. He was to furniſh the king of Sweden with a number of ſhips ſufficient to tranſport ten thouſand Swedes to England, and thirty thouſand to Germany. The united forces of Peter and Charles were to attack the king of England in his German dominions, eſpecially in Bremen and Verden; and were likewiſe to be employed in re-eſtabliſhing the duke of Holſtein, and compelling the king of Pruſſia to agree to a treaty, by which he would have been deprived of part of thoſe territories, which he had ſeized. From the time that this alliance was made, Charles aſſumed ſuch lofty airs, as if his victorious troops, reinforced by thoſe of the czar, had already carried all his ſchemes into execution. He required the emperor of Germany, in a peremptory manner, to fulfil the treaty of Altranſtad. But the court of Vienna would hardly deign to give an anſwer to the propoſal of a prince from whom ſhe had nothing to fear.

The king of Poland did not enjoy the ſame tranquillity; but ſaw the clouds gathering all around him. The Poliſh nobility had formed a confederacy againſt him; and, ever ſince his reſtoration, he had perpetually been engaged either in wars or treaties with his ſubjects. The czar, who was now become a dangerous mediator, had an hundred gallies near Dantzick, and forty thouſand men on the frontiers of Poland. All the North was filled with jealouſy and apprehenſion. Fleming, of all men in the world the moſt apt to diſtruſt, and himſelf the moſt to be diſtruſted, was the firſt who ſuſpected the deſigns of the czar and the king of Sweden

Sweden in favour of Staniſlaus. He therefore reſolved to have this prince ſeized in the duchy of Deux-Ponts, as James Sobieſky had formerly been in Sileſia. Saiſſan, a Frenchman, one of thoſe reſtleſs and enterpriſing ſpirits, who wander into foreign parts to try their fortunes, had lately brought a ſmall number of his countrymen, bold and daring like himſelf, into the ſervice of the king of Poland. He imparted a project to Fleming, by which he undertook, with the aſſiſtance of thirty French officers, to ſeize Staniſlaus in his own palace, and carry him a priſoner to Dreſden. The project was approved. Enterprizes of that nature were not then uncommon. Some of thoſe deſperate fellows who are called Bravos in Italy, had performed the like atchievements in the Milaneſe, during the laſt war between France and Germany: and, even ſince that time, ſeveral French refugees in Holland had ventured to penetrate to Verſailles, in order to carry off the dauphin, and actually had ſeized the perſon of the firſt equerry, almoſt under the windows of the caſtle, where Lewis XIV. reſided.

Accordingly, Saiſſan diſpoſed his men and poſt-horſes in the beſt manner he could contrive, in order to ſeize and carry off Staniſlaus. But the enterprize was diſcovered the night before it was to have been carried into execution. Several of the deſperadoes ſaved themby flight, and the reſt were taken priſoners. They had no right to expect to be treated as priſoners of war, but rather as common robbers. Staniſlaus, inſtead of puniſhing them as their crime deſerved, contented himſelf with reproaching them with their baſeneſs, and even that he did with the greateſt politeneſs and humanity. Nay, what is more, he gave them money to defray the expences of their return to Poland, and, by that act of generoſity, plainly ſhewed that his rival Auguſtus had but too much reaſon to fear him *.

Mean

* Here M. Norberg accuſes the author of treating crowned heads with too little reſpect; as if this faithful account contained in it any thing injurious, or as if we were obliged to relate aught but truth of departed kings. What! does he imagine

Mean while Charles ſet out on a ſecond expedition to Norway, in the month of October 1718. He had taken all his meaſures with ſo much prudence and precaution, that he hoped he ſhould be able, in the ſpace of ſix months, to make himſelf maſter of that kingdom. He rather choſe to go and conquer rocks amidſt ice and ſnow, in the depth of winter, which kills the animals even in Sweden, where the cold is leſs ſevere, than to recover his beautiful provinces in Germany. Theſe he expected he ſhould ſoon be able to retake in conſequence of his alliance with the czar; and, in any event, it was a much more tempting object of ambition to wreſt a kingdom from his victorious foe.

At the mouth of the river Tiſtendall, near the bay of Denmark, and between the towns of Bahus and Anſlo, ſtands Frederickſhall, a place of great ſtrength and importance, and conſidered as the key of the kingdom. To this town Charles laid ſiege, in the month of December. The ſoldiers, benumbed with cold, were hardly able to break the ground, which was ſo much hardened by the froſt, that it was almoſt as difficult to pierce it, as if they had been opening trenches in a rock. But nothing could reſiſt the reſolution and perſeverance of the Swedes, while they ſaw their king at their head, and ſharing in all their labours. Never, indeed, did Charles undergo greater fatigues. His conſtitution, ſtrengthened by eighteen years of ſevere labour, was hardened to ſuch a degree, that he ſlept in the open field in Norway in the midſt of winter, covered only with a cloak, and without doing the leaſt prejudice to his health. Several of the ſoldiers on duty dropt down dead with cold; and though the reſt were almoſt frozen to death, yet as they ſaw their king partaking in all their hardſhips, they durſt not utter a ſingle word of complaint. Having heard, a little before this expedition, of a certain woman in Scania, called Joan Dotter, who had lived for ſeveral months, with-

gine that hiſtory ſhould reſemble a ſermon preached before a ſovereign, in which the flattering orator loads his royal hearer with unmerited praiſes?

out any other nouriſhment than water; he, who had all his life ſtudied to inure himſelf to the worſt extremes that human nature can ſupport, reſolved to try how long he could faſt without fainting. Accordingly he faſted five whole days, without either eating or drinking; and on the morning of the ſixth, rode two leagues, and then alighted at the tent of the prince of Heſſe, his brother-in-law, where he eat heartily, without feeling the leaſt diſorder, either from his long faſt of five days, or from the plentiful meal which now ſucceeded *.

With ſuch a body of iron, inſpired by a ſoul alike enterpriſing and inflexible in every condition, he could not fail to be formidable to all his neighbours.

On the eleventh of December, being St. Andrew's day, he went at nine in the evening to view the trenches; and not finding the parallel ſo far advanced as he expected, he could not help expreſſing his ſurprize and diſpleaſure. Mr. Megret, a French engineer, who conducted the ſiege, aſſured him that the place would be taken in eight days. "Well! we ſhall ſee," ſays the king, and went on with the engineer to ſurvey the works. He ſtopped at a place where a branch of the trenches formed an angle with the parallel. He kneeled on the inner *talus*, and reſting his elbow on the parapet, continued for ſome time to view the men who were carrying on the trenches by ſtar-light.

Circumſtances, in their own nature trivial, become important when they relate to the death of ſuch a man as Charles XII. I muſt therefore take upon me to ſay, that the whole of the converſation, reported by ſo many writers to have paſſed between the king and Megret the engineer, is abſolutely falſe. The following account I can affirm, upon the beſt authority, to be the real truth of the matter.

The

* Norberg alledges, that it was to cure a pain in his breaſt that Charles ſubmitted to this long abſtinence. Confeſſor Norberg is ſurely a moſt wretched phyſician.

The king ſtood with almoſt the half of his body expoſed to a battery of cannon pointed directly againſt the angle where he was. He was attended by two Frenchmen only: one of whom was M. Siquier, his aid-de-camp, a man of courage and conduct, who had entered into his ſervice in Turky, and was particularly attached to the prince of Heſſe; the other was this engineer. The cannon fired upon them with grape-ſhot, to which the king, as he ſtood behind them, was moſt expoſed. A little behind them was count Swerin, who commanded the trenches. While Swerin was giving orders to count Poſſe, a captain of the guards, and to one Culber, his aid-de-camp, Siquier and Megret ſaw the king fall upon the parapet, with a deep ſigh. They ran to him; but he was already dead. A ball of half a pound had ſtruck him on the right temple, and made a hole ſufficient to receive three fingers at once. His head reclined upon the parapet; his left eye beat in, and the right one entirely beat out of its ſocket. Though he expired the moment he received the wound, yet by a kind of inſtinctive motion, he had graſped the hilt of his ſword in his hand, and ſtill lay in that poſture. At ſight of this ſhocking ſpectacle, Megret, a man of a ſingular turn of mind, and of great indifference of temper, ſaid, "Come, gentlemen, the farce is ended, let us now go to ſupper." Siquier ran immediately and informed count Swerin of what had happened. They all agreed to conceal the news of his death from the ſoldiers, till ſuch time as the prince of Heſſe ſhould be acquainted with it. The body was wrapt up in a grey cloak. Siquier put his hat and wig on the king's head; and in this condition Charles was carried, under the name of one captain Carlſberg, through the midſt of his troops, who thus ſaw their dead king paſs them, without ever dreaming that it was his majeſty.

The prince gave inſtant orders that no one ſhould ſtir out of the camp, and that all the paſſes to Sweden ſhould be ſtrictly guarded, that ſo he might have time to take the neceſſary meaſures for placing the crown on his wife's head, and to exclude the duke of Holſtein, who might lay claim to it.

Thus fell Charles XII. king of Sweden, at the age of thirty-ſix years and an half, after having experienced all the grandeur of proſperity, and all the hardſhips of adverſity, without being either ſoftened by the one, or the leaſt diſturbed by the other. Almoſt all his actions, even thoſe of his private life, border on the marvellous. Perhaps he was the only man, moſt certainly he was the only king, that ever lived without failings. He carried all the virtues of the hero to ſuch an exceſs as render them no leſs dangerous than the oppoſite vices. His reſolution, hardened into obſtinacy, occaſioned his misfortunes in the Ukraine, and detained him five years in Turky. His liberality, degenerating into profuſion, ruined Sweden. His courage, puſhed the length of temerity, was the cauſe of his death. And, during the laſt years of his reign, the means he employed to ſupport his authority, differed little from tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which would have been ſufficient to immortalize another prince, proved pernicious to his country. He never was the aggreſſor; but, in taking vengeance on thoſe who had injured him, his reſentment got the better of his prudence. He was the firſt man who ever aſpired to the title of conqueror, without the leaſt deſire of enlarging his dominions. His only end in ſubduing kingdoms was to have the pleaſure of giving them away. His paſſion for glory, for war, and revenge, prevented him from being a good politician; a quality, without which the world had never before ſeen any one a conqueror. Before a battle, and after a victory, he was modeſt and humble; and after a defeat firm and undaunted. Severe to himſelf as well as to others, he too little regarded either his own life and labours, or thoſe of his ſubjects; an extraordinary rather than a great man, and more worthy to be admired than imitated. From the hiſtory of his life however, ſucceeding kings may learn, that a quiet and happy government is infinitely preferable to ſo much glory.

Charles XII. was of a tall ſtature and portly figure; he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes full of ſweetneſs, and a handſome noſe. But the lower part of his face

face was diſagreeable, and too often disfigured by a frequent laugh, which ſcarce opened his lips; and as to hair and beard, he had hardly any at all. A profound ſilence reigned at his table. Notwithſtanding the inflexible obſtinacy of his temper, he always retained that baſhfulneſs which goes by the name of falſe modeſty.

He was but little qualified to make a figure in converſation, becauſe, having addicted himſelf entirely to war and action, he was utterly unacquainted with the pleaſures of ſociety. Till the time of his reſidence among the Turks, which furniſhed him with a good deal of leiſure, he had read nothing but Cæſar's Commentaries and the hiſtory of Alexander. It is true he had wrote ſome remarks on the art of war, and particularly on his own campaigns from 1700 to 1709. This he owned to the chevalier de Folard, but ſaid that the manuſcript had been loſt in the unfortunate battle of Pultowa. Some people would make us believe that Charles was a good mathematician. That he was poſſeſſed of great depth and penetration of thought, cannot be denied; but the arguments they produce to prove his knowledge in mathematics are by no means concluſive. He wanted to alter the method of counting by tens, and to ſubſtitute in its place the number of ſixty-four, becauſe that number contains both a ſquare and a cube, and being divided by two is reducible to an unit. This, if it proves any thing, only ſhews that he always delighted in what was difficult and extraordinary.

With regard to his religion, though the ſentiments of a prince ought to have no influence on other men, and though the opinion of a monarch, ſo illiterate as Charles, is of little conſequence in theſe matters, yet in this, as well as in other particulars, we muſt gratify the curioſity of mankind, who are anxious to know whatever relates to a prince of his character. I am informed, by the gentleman who hath furniſhed me with the greateſt part of the materials which compoſe this hiſtory, that Charles XII. was a ſerious Lutheran till the year 1707. Happening then to be at Leipſick, he there

there met with the famous philoſopher Mr. Leibnitz, a man who thought and ſpoke with equal freedom, and had already inſtilled his notions into more princes than one. I cannot believe what is commonly reported, that Charles XII. conceived an indifference for Lutheraniſm from the converſation of this philoſopher, who never had the honour to talk with him above a quarter of an hour; but I have been told by M. Fabricius, who lived with him in great familiarity for ſeven years ſucceſſively, that having ſeen, during his abode among the Turks, ſuch an infinite variety of religions, he became more lax in his principles. This fact is likewiſe confirmed by Motraye in his voyages. The ſame too is the opinion of the count de Croiſſy, who hath often told me, that of all his old principles, Charles retained none but that of abſolute predeſtination, a doctrine that favoured his courage, and juſtified his temerity. The czar was of much the ſame way of thinking, with regard to fate and religion; but talked of theſe ſubjects more frequently, as indeed he did of every thing elſe with his favourites, in a very familiar manner; for he had this advantage over Charles, that he was a good philoſopher and an eloquent ſpeaker.

Here I cannot help taking notice of a moſt uncharitable ſuſpicion, too readily embraced by the weak and credulous, and too induſtriouſly propagated by the malicious and ill-natured, to wit, that the death of princes is always owing to poiſon or aſſaſſination. It was then the current report in Germany, that Mr. Siquier was the man who killed the king of Sweden. That brave officer was long grieved at this injurious aſperſion; and as he was one day talking to me on the ſubject: "I might have killed the king of Sweden, (ſaid he) but, had I been capable of forming ſuch a barbarous reſolution, ſo great was my veneration for that illuſtrious hero, that I could not have had the courage to carry it into execution."

I know, indeed, that Siquier himſelf gave occaſion to this heavy charge, which, even to this day, many of the Swedes believe to be well founded. He told me that being ſeized with a violent fever at Stockholm, he cried

cried out that he had killed the king of Sweden; and that, in the height of his phrenzy, he even opened the window, and publicly begged pardon for the regicide. When he was informed, in the courſe of his recovery, of what he had ſaid in his illneſs, he was almoſt ready to die with grief. This anecdote I did not chuſe to publiſh during his life-time. I ſaw him a little before he expired, and think I can ſafely affirm, that, far from killing Charles XII. he would have ſuffered a thouſand deaths to ſave the life of that hero. Had he actually committed ſuch a horrid crime, it muſt have been to ſerve ſome prince, who, no doubt, would have liberally rewarded him for ſuch a piece of treachery; but he died in France ſo extremely poor, that he even ſtood in need of my aſſiſtance. If theſe reaſons are not thought ſufficient to vindicate his memory, let it be conſidered, that the ball by which Charles fell could not come from a piſtol, and yet that Siquier had no other way to give the fatal blow, than by a piſtol concealed under his garments.

The king was no ſooner dead, than the ſiege of Frederickſhall was raiſed, and a total change took place in the government. The Swedes, who conſidered the glory of their ſovereign rather as a burden than an advantage, applied their whole attention towards concluding a peace with their enemies, and ſuppreſſing that abſolute power which baron de Gortz had ſo much abuſed to their ruin. The ſtates, by a free and voluntary choice, elected the ſiſter of Charles XII. for their queen, and obliged her, by a ſolemn act, to renounce all hereditary right to the crown, that ſo ſhe might hold it by the ſuffrages of the people. She bound herſelf by the moſt ſacred oaths never to attempt the reeſtabliſhment of arbitrary power; and at laſt, ſacrificing the love of royalty to conjugal affection, yielded the crown to her huſband, who was choſen king by the ſtates, and mounted the throne on the ſame conditions with his royal conſort.

The baron de Gortz was taken into cuſtody immediately after the death of Charles, and condemned by the Senate of Stockholm to loſe his head, at the foot of the common

common gallows; an act of revenge, perhaps, rather than of juſtice, and a cruel inſult to the memory of a king whom Sweden ſtill admires.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
AUG 17
1912
CAMBRIDGE